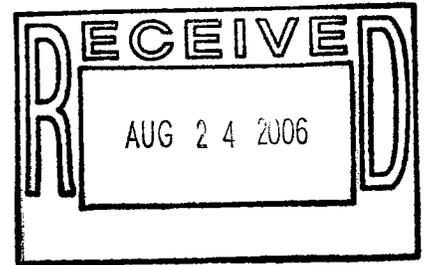


August 17, 2006

Randall L. Johnson, Chair
Citizens' Health Care Working Group
7201 Wisconsin Avenue Suite 575
Bethesda, MD 20814



Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you for your work chairing the Citizens' Health Care Working Group. While I support the majority of the Working Group's interim recommendations, I am writing to express my concern with the recommendation to *expand and modify the Federally Qualified Health Center concept to accommodate other community-based health centers and practices serving vulnerable populations.*

The FQHC program is successful because centers respond to the unique health needs of their community. The consumer-dominated Board of Directors assures that local constituents have a strong voice in setting policy. As an Executive Director, I serve at the pleasure of that board and am constantly impressed with the dedication of the consumer members who keep the organization focused on The Mission. Removing the requirement of a consumer majority removes the sense of community ownership and empowerment that has made the movement a success for over 30 years.

I strongly encourage you to eliminate this recommendation. Other providers who want federal recognition and support, but do not wish to meet current FQHC requirements, should seek independent legislative recognition – making their justification in a manner similar to FQHCs.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lightbody
Executive Director

