



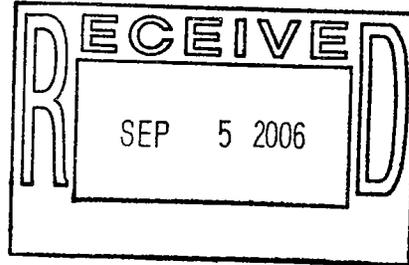
PROVENA
CENTRAL ILLINOIS REGION
United Samaritans Medical Center
Covenant Medical Center

*Provena United Samaritans
812 North Logan Avenue
Danville, Illinois 61832
(217) 443-5201*

*Provena Covenant
1400 West Park
Urbana, Illinois 61801
(217) 337-2141*

August 30, 2006

Citizens' Health Care
Working Group
7201 Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 575
Bethesda, MD 20814



The members of the Mission Committee of Provena Covenant Medical Center, a sub committee of the Provena Central Illinois Board of Directors, are writing in support of the Citizen's Health Care Working Group efforts in forming public policy for affordable health care.

We support the Working Group's recommendation that people be protected from very high health care costs. Implementation of any plan should first address those most at risk, with preference given to covering children, low-income families, and other vulnerable populations. Everyone should be protected against catastrophic health care costs that can force families into bankruptcy or even poverty. As a basic human right, health care is not a commodity that should be denied or limited to anyone. In cases where severe illness requires expensive and prolonged treatment, that treatment should not cause any individual or family unreasonable hardship.

In addition, members of the Mission Committee further support the Working Group's recommendation to fundamentally restructure the way that palliative care, hospice care and other end-of-life services are financed and provided, so that people living with advanced incurable conditions have increased access to these services in the environment they choose. As a Catholic health care provider, we believe that comprehensive and effective palliative and end of life care should be central to those facing serious and life threatening illness. This care should begin with advanced planning and include full information about the patient's health condition; active patient participation in decisions about care; and high quality medical, nursing, and psycho-social services that includes relief of pain and other symptoms. Attention to spiritual needs to help patients and their families find meaning and peace of mind in the face of their illness

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Himens, SSCM
Chairperson, Mission Committee, Provena Covenant Medical Center