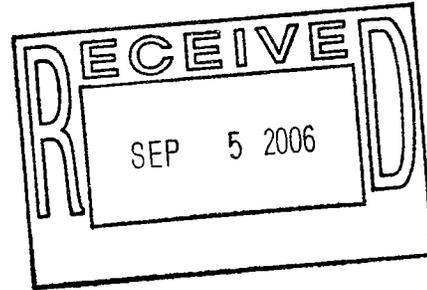




PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL



August 31, 2006

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

Dear Members of the Working Group:

I have read the major proposals of the Citizen's Health Care Working Group. On behalf of all 2300-plus associates of the Providence Health Ministry in Mobile, Alabama, let me say how pleased we are with the group's efforts to increase access to needed health care services—efforts which have been most ably led by my colleague, Dr. Patricia Maryland. I generally support all of your recommendations, but want to add my own comments for the following areas.

Affordable health care coverage can no longer be considered a privilege. Abundant data exist to support the negative impact on individual health status that results from the inability to get needed preventative care and other routine health services.

I am also well aware of the potential to increase access through integrated community health networks, as demonstrated through our local efforts. Mobile's "Bridges to Better Health" coalition, engendered by Providence's 2002 Community Assessment process, has brought together agencies and providers to increase information and resources for those who are medically underserved.

Finally, we concur with the recommendation for meaningful reform of end-of-life care, to assure that individuals and families have supportive care alternatives. Our palliative care program at Providence is an excellent example of this.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this most important matter. We appreciate all that is being done to help those most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

Clark P. Christiansen
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc. Patricia Maryland, PhD, Chair, Citizens' Health Care Working Group
Susan Nestor Levy, Sr. VP Advocacy and External Relations Ascension Health