

NEWS RELEASE
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**Senate Finance Committee's Options for Health Care Reform
Put Nation One Step Closer to Quality, Affordable Health Care
For Everyone, Leading Patient Advocate Says**

*Statement of Debra L. Ness, President
National Partnership for Women & Families*

"In issuing a broad set of options to restructure our payment and delivery systems, the Senate Finance Committee today kicked off the critically important debate that will determine whether or not this nation makes quality, affordable health care available for all. These options create a solid foundation on which we can build the kind of reform that would shift us to a system that puts patients at the center of health care delivery.

Achieving a patient-centered delivery system that is equipped to deliver high quality care and control costs will require significant change in *what* we provide and *how* we provide it. The Senate Finance Committee has started this conversation in the right place with an emphasis on primary care, care coordination and payment strategies that will promote greater collaboration, shared accountability and more patient-centered care. The options zero in on our most vulnerable, high-risk, high-cost patients who are falling through the cracks of our current system.

The options call for a fundamental shift toward a system that links payment to quality and enables us to get more for our health care dollars. These strategies will reward value over volume, coordination over fragmentation, and drive continuous improvements in the care patients receive.

These options also are a pragmatic approach to change because they allow for innovation and opportunities for learning as we go, which makes passage of meaningful health reform legislation much more likely.

We need comprehensive health care reform this year. The magnitude and urgency of the crisis we face demands that we act boldly. We look forward to working with the Committee to turn these options into legislation."

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The National Partnership for Women & Families is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family responsibilities. More information is available at www.nationalpartnership.org.