

July 16, 2009

Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Al Franken
Representative Tim Walz
Representative John Klein
Representative Erik Paulsen
Representative Betty McCollum
Representative Keith Ellison
Representative Michelle Bachmann
Representative Collin Peterson
Representative Jim Oberstar

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Dear Minnesota Congressional Delegation,

Minnesota's health care delivery system is a model for the nation. While there is certainly room for improvement, its further development needs to be promoted and not restrained as we look to improve the health of our entire nation. The delivery of eye care is no different.

- There is a tendency to define or limit services by the provider delivering the service rather than the service provided. Eye care delivery in Minnesota has long focused on the service and not the provider. This allows for stronger patient centered interaction and an eye care delivery system that is a model for the nation. The removal of arbitrary restrictions on the delivery of health care services should be a cornerstone of a reformed system of care. A true patient centered system will focus on the care that must be delivered, not the provider type delivering the care. Again, eye care delivery in Minnesota provides such a model. The use of Medicare provider definitions in the Medicaid program is one step toward reaffirming the models that work in Minnesota.
- We must focus on geographic access to primary and preventive services. Optometry has a long history of providing services in the places people live and work, not just in close proximity to health care institutions. This is a delivery structure that the rest of the system is beginning to focus on. We can provide a model of care that works.
- Patient-centered models of care coordination need to provide incentives to work with all providers. Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in adults. While the annual eye exam for a diabetic patient is focused on examining signs of retinopathy, timed to offset and compliment care provided by the primary care physician, the exam can serve multiple purposes. Coordination can reinforce basic health messages and provide another check for any specific issues the patient may have.

We look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the health of all Minnesotans through the process of reforming the delivery and payment systems. We know that the status quo is not an option, but the advancements we have made in Minnesota must be built upon, and not torn down.

We are always available and prepared to work with you as we have in the past.

Sincerely,

Linda Chous, OD
President

Jim Meffert-Nelson
Executive Director