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The mission of the Virginia Association of Free & Charitable Clinics is to support and advocate for our member clinics so that Virginia's underserved have access to quality care.

The vision of the VAFCC is a Virginia where all people have access to comprehensive, quality health care.

March 4, 2016

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate Committee of Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6200

Dear Senators Grassley and Wyden:

On behalf of the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (VAFCC) and the patients that our 60 member clinics serve daily, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Price of Sovaldi and its Impact on the US Health Care System Report*.

While the VAFCC wants the safest, most effective, and cutting edge drug therapies available for our patients and all patients, it cannot be ignored that sole sourced medication can, and many times does, cause limited and unaffordable treatment options for low-income and medically underserved patients, like those treated in free and charitable clinics in Virginia.

Access to affordable medication is critical for individuals to combat diagnosed diseases. The high costs of many medications make it almost impossible for the medically underserved and working poor to afford and remain compliant with necessary medication treatment therapies. In 2014, our member clinic provided patients, majority of which who are chronically ill, with 739,230 30-day prescriptions valued at \$121,340,889.53. These prescriptions were obtained through various means such as Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs), donations through supply chain partners, or even purchased at full price from local pharmacies, but many clinics continue to struggle to provide their patients with the life-saving medications they need due to high costs. Despite the large number of prescriptions distributed to patients in need, many more medications continue to be unattainable due to increasing prices, which are unaffordable to both the patients and the clinics.

As the Committee reviews the *Sovaldi Report*, the VAFCC strongly encourages the broader examination of medication affordability and accessibility for all generic, branded, and sole sourced medications. Affordable medication therapies are critical for the health and wellness of not only for the over 75,000 patients seen by our member clinics, but also the country as a whole, and we are prepared to work with the members of the Committee to address this important issue.

I am available, at any time, to speak or meet with members of the Committee or staff and I may be reached by phone at (804) 340-3434 or by email at linda@vafreeclinics.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments, and we look forward to working with you to address affordability and accessibility of medication.

Sincerely,

Linda D. Wilkinson, MPA
CEO