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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

JOSHUA SHEINKMAN, STAFF DIRECTOR
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June 12, 2014

Dear Stakeholders,

The digital world is strikingly different today than it was only fifteen years ago. In 2000, 25 percent of the world's information was stored digitally. Today, 98 percent of the world's information is stored digitally. In 2003, an estimated five quintillion, or five billion billions, of bytes of digital data were generated throughout the world. Today the equivalent amount of data is generated every two days.

Health care-related data, specifically, is a growing but largely untapped resource for accelerating improvements in health care quality and value. This data has great potential for use by consumers who can be empowered to choose providers that best fit their specific needs; by providers who can improve and deliver higher-quality care; and by payers who can design the most efficient and effective delivery models.

To help foster further advances, state and federal entities have taken important steps toward greater health care data transparency. This increased access to data is already giving providers, consumers, payers, and others with powerful resources for improving our health care system, and yet significant data gaps continue to exist and limit the full potential.

Therefore we are seeking your ideas that will enhance the availability and utility of health care data, while maintaining and strictly protecting patient privacy. We welcome input from all interest parties including, but not limited to, a broad spectrum of providers, patients and consumers, employers, entrepreneurs, developers, payers, states, researchers, and public health experts.

Specifically, we respectfully ask:

1. What data sources should be made more broadly available?
2. How, in what form, and for what purposes should this data be conveyed?
3. What reforms would help reduce the unnecessary fragmentation of health care data? What reforms would improve the accessibility and usability of health care data for consumers, payers, and providers?
4. What barriers stand in the way of stakeholders using existing data sources more effectively and what reforms should be made to overcome these barriers?

Please respond before **August 12, 2014** and submit all written comments to the Senate data mailbox at data@finance.senate.gov. Note: all submitted comments shall be considered part of the public record.

Thank you for taking the time to provide thoughtful feedback. We look forward to reviewing your submissions.

Sincerely,



Charles Grassley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
Chairman