

THE ARCHIMEDES MOVEMENT

"Give me a lever and a place to stand, and I can move the Earth."

February 3, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

It is increasingly clear that simply trying to get all Americans access to health insurance will not result in better health for Americans or reasonable health care costs. Without simultaneously having a public debate about what we are buying with our health care dollars and how the delivery system is structured, we will not solve the nation's health care crisis.

Given the turmoil in our financial markets, we can no longer afford a system that gives us only a small return on investment in terms of population health. We should get more in return for \$2.3 trillion in health care expenditures.

People all around this nation are looking for political leadership which will squarely confront the real issue involved here: that we cannot control rising health care costs unless we fundamentally shift our goal from *financing health care* to *improving the health of the American people*. And unless we can change our current fiscal trajectory (driven by the aging of the Baby Boom Generation) we will face a national debt of staggering proportions and an ever-increasing portion of the federal budget will be consumed by the entitlement programs.

Not only does this pose a serious threat to the fiscal stability of our nation, but the opportunity costs involved will make it difficult to invest in our other pressing national priorities, such as renewable energy research and development, and the other transitional investments necessary to move to a post-fossil-fuel economy.

There is not a simple solution to this problem, but there is a solution – as long as we have made the right diagnosis. Universal coverage is important but unless that coverage results in better health and comes at a cost that does not bankrupt the nation, we will not have fulfilled our obligation to the future. We can do better.

We are here to help. We invite you to Oregon where we have spent the past three years in exactly the type of engagement that you are now asking all Americans to embark upon. We have held town halls, community forums, house parties and chapter meetings in people's homes, coffee shops and community centers. We passed legislation in 2007, leading to a year-long dialogue with legislators, policy makers and key stakeholders. We know what we want in a health system.

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People in Oregon, and all across this nation, are willing to do the hard work, and to discuss the necessary tradeoffs, because we believe in America's ability to find innovative solutions to its most difficult problems.

We look forward to meeting with you in Oregon and to working together to shape this nation's future.

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.
Oregon Governor, 1995–2003
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cc: Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley

The Archimedes Movement, founded in 2006, created a new forum for civic engagement around the complex social issues facing our communities and the nation. To date, more than 5,000 people from Oregon, Washington and several other states have participated in dialogue resulting in a framework for reform and clear articulation of the objectives for a new health system.



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The following organizations join with Governor Kitzhaber in signing this letter to President Barack Obama:

The Archimedes Movement	Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans
AARP Oregon	Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems
American Health Care Appraisal LLC	Oregon Chapter of the Physicians for National Health Insurance
Acumentra Health	Oregon Center for Christian Values
Amity Vineyards	Oregon College of Oriental Medicine
Aligned Management Associates, Inc	Oregon Dental Association
Ashland Pediatrics, PC	Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition
Bambu Clinic	Oregon Holistic Nurses Association
Beaverton Medical Clinic	Oregon Medical Association
CareOregon	Oregon Nurses Association
Cascade AIDS Project	Oregon Pediatric Society
Centro Cultural of Washington County	Oregon Primary Care Association
Doug Stamm, Meyer Memorial Trust	Oregon School-Based Health Care Network
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon	PeaceHealth Oregon Region
Health Care for All - Oregon	Sammamish Diabetes and Lipid Clinic, PLLC
HealthMatters of Central Oregon	Sisters of the Road, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance of NW Oregon	The Foundation for Medical Excellence
Jubitz Family Foundation	Trillium Family Services
Lane Independent Physician Association	
League of Women Voter of Oregon	
McKenzie Pediatrics	
Medicaid Advisory Committee	
Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good	
Mid-Valley Health Care Advocates	
NAMI Oregon (National Alliance on Mental Illness)	
National College of Natural Medicine	
Northeast Oregon Network (NEON)	
Northwest Health Foundation	
Northwest Internal Medicine Consultants	
Oregon Academy of Family Physicians	
Oregon Action	

In addition, **more than 2,200 individuals** have signed their name to this letter so far.

