December 10, 2012

Commissioner Lucinda Jesson
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Governor’s Task Force on Health Care Reform
540 Cedar St
St. Paul, MN  55101

Dear Commissioner Jesson and Task Force members:

The Minnesota Business Partnership (MBP) appreciates the time and effort the Health Reform Task Force and its work groups have put toward developing the recommendations contained in the “Roadmap to a Healthier Minnesota,” draft dated November 29, 2012.

The MBP members are chief executives of Minnesota’s large employers. Though our members are often national or global in scope, the Partnership’s focus is on Minnesota and maintaining a high quality of life for all in the state by keeping our economy strong. Health care reform remains a top priority for our members.

We share the vision of the Task Force, the “Triple Aim” of improved population health, improved patient experience and health care, and decreased health care cost growth. In order to create a sustainable system that provides higher quality care at a lower cost, the MBP advocates for comprehensive reforms that engage consumers, align purchasers, and reorient providers and insurers to find and deliver market-driven efficiencies and permanent health care savings. The Minnesota experience has been to do this through collaboration with the various industries.

While we support the overall goals of the draft Roadmap, we have some concerns regarding the strategies, particularly in regard to the recommendations from the Care Integration and Payment Reform work group. We submitted a memo to the work group in October echoing the concerns raised by numerous stakeholders. These industry stakeholders have outlined serious issues regarding how the proposed recommendations may dampen their ability to innovate and remain flexible to address the needs of the market.

Restraining the growth of health care costs is a common goal; however the recommendation to use blunt cost-control measures for medical expenses is particularly concerning. Given the enormous changes occurring in our health care system right now – from federal ACA implementation to continued reform at the state level – we echo the concerns voiced by stakeholders that these strategies could have unintended consequences on access to and delivery of care in our system.

The MBP also co-signed a letter with a number of other organizations regarding barriers facing physicians, clinics, hospitals, health plans, health insurance and workers.
compensation carriers around the sharing of clinical data to better manage care. We urge the administration to develop a comprehensive legislative strategy to remove these barriers in the coming session. In order to make progress toward better patient care and coordination, providers, payer and patients need to be able to share reliable patient data in a secure and confidential way.

And finally, innovation in any market relies on flexibility to meet changing demands. Health care is no exception. We share the goal of moving from a system that pays for procedures to one that pays for results and outcomes. While current advances are being made in care delivery and payment reform, particularly related to total cost of care arrangements, these strategies may not be effective for every group or population. We encourage allowing flexibility for alternative delivery and payment reform models that may utilize other incentives for value-based reform.

Again, we share the Triple Aim vision of the Health Reform Task Force. The recommendations contained in the Roadmap are complex, and they intertwine with federal reforms currently being implemented. We urge the Task Force to proceed with caution as the key industries determine how all these complex reforms fit together. We encourage the Task Force to continue working with these stakeholders to address their concerns. Through collaboration Minnesota can advance the Task Force’s “Triple Aim” vision, and bring healthy competition and reasonable standards to our health care system.

MBP remains committed to working with the Administration and the Legislature to advance market-based health care reform in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Beth McMullen
Health Policy Director