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November 19, 2025

Chair Mike Crapo (R-ID)
Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR)
Senate Committee on Finance

Dear Chair Crapo and Ranking Member Wyden:

Thank you for convening today's important hearing on the rising cost of healthcare and considering meaningful solutions for all Americans.

Better Solutions for Healthcare – a national coalition representing a broad range of employers and consumers – is committed to advancing legislation to harmonize billing practices in off-campus hospital outpatient facilities, ending corporate hospital systems' "dishonest billing" practices, and shining more light on hospital prices.

Healthcare affordability is at a breaking point. The American public consistently cites healthcare costs as a top concern, and next year employers face the largest price increase in more than 15 years¹. According to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation report, employer-sponsored family coverage is projected to reach an average of \$27,000 in 2026. As President and CEO Drew Altman noted, "You can buy a new Toyota Corolla Hybrid, every year, for less."² Likewise, a recent Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 31 percent of adults identify healthcare costs as the most critical cost-of-living issue in the country—surpassing concerns about food, housing, and energy³.

Our coalition's mission is to educate the public about the leading role corporate hospital systems play in driving up the cost of healthcare and to advocate for reforms to lower the prices Americans pay for care. America's job creators and local and state business leaders know all too well how the rapidly increasing cost of care creates barriers to good health.

Corporate hospital systems sit at the center of the affordability crisis. As these systems acquire more independent physician practices, they increasingly bill routine services provided in doctors' offices as if they were delivered in a hospital setting. The result is that the same service—provided by the same doctor, in the same office—can cost patients up to 300 percent

¹ *Employers prepare for the highest health benefit cost increase in 15 years.* Mercer. 3 Sept., 2025.
<https://www.mercer.com/en-us/insights/us-health-news/employers-prepare-for-the-highest-health-benefit-cost-increase-in-15-years/>

² *The Semi-Sad Prospects for Controlling Employer Health Care Costs.* Oct 22, 2025.
<https://www.kff.org/from-drew-altman/the-semi-sad-prospects-for-controlling-employer-health-care-costs/>

³ *Cost of living worries haunt Americans ahead of midterms.* Oct 24, 2025.
<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/cost-of-living-worries-haunt-americans-ahead-midterms-reutersipsos-poll-finds-2025-10-24/>

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more simply because a corporate hospital system now owns the practice⁴. Rural Americans, who often have few options for receiving care, are particularly vulnerable to these inflationary practices.

We cannot meaningfully address the healthcare affordability crisis without confronting the outsized role of corporate hospital systems. Today, one out of every three healthcare dollars goes to hospitals⁵, and hospitals charge \$417 for every \$100 of their underlying costs⁶.

For patients to realize true affordability, Americans depend on pragmatic legislators to work together to address the problem of corporate hospital costs. Thankfully, there is growing bipartisan consensus to put an end to these alarming price markups.

Two meaningful steps Congress can take include:

- Adopting site-neutral payment policies that prevent hospitals from charging more for the same care provided in outpatient settings, leveling the playing field for patients and the employers that provide healthcare coverage.
- Establishing a unique national provider identifier for outpatient hospital billing, which would increase transparency, limit facility fee markups, and make it easier to track and compare prices across facilities, such as the bipartisan Fair Billing Act (S. 2497).

Better Solutions urges the committee to support policies that promote hospital competition, enforce federal price transparency laws for hospital charges, rein in hospital markups, and ensure honest billing practices by corporate hospital systems.

Sincerely,
Connie Partoyan
Executive Director

⁴ Shinkman, Ron. "Study quantifies cost differential between physician offices and hospital outpatient care." *Fierce Healthcare*, Accessed 6 March, 2024.
<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/finance/study-quantifies-cost-differential-between-physician-offices-and-hospital-outpatient-care>.

⁵ Gee, Emily. "The High Price of Hospital Care." *Center for American Progress*. Accessed 13 Oct. 2023, www.americanprogress.org/article/high-price-hospital-care/.

⁶ *The Cost of In-Home Care*, MDC Healthcare, 24 Oct. 2022, www.mdchealthcare.org/understanding-the-cost-of-in-home-care-and-the-cost-of-a-hospital-stay/#:~:text=U.S.%20hospitals%20charge%20an%20average,stay%20at%20home%20long%20term.