



Charles N. Kahn III
President

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Dear Editor:

Assertions by Miles Mogulescu in the Huffington Post and Ed Schultz on MSNBC regarding the issue of the public option in health reform and President Obama's White House, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus and hospitals are both inaccurate and distort the facts.

Hospital groups including the American Hospital Association, the Catholic Health Association, and the Federation of American Hospitals, each long time proponents of health reform to attain universal health insurance coverage, joined in discussions with staff from the White House and the Senate Finance Committee concerning the hospital role in achieving comprehensive health reform legislation. These discussions resulted in an understanding between the White House, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and these hospital groups that health reform would include a contribution from hospitals of \$155 billion in Congressional Budget Office scoreable savings through Medicare and Medicaid payment reductions. The hospital groups' working assumption was that these savings would contribute to reaching a goal of at least 94% of health coverage for non-elderly U.S. residents.

It is accurate that we opposed the public option throughout the health reform process. But, contrary to the assertions by Messrs Mogulescu and Schultz, there was never an agreement, implicit or explicit, regarding the public option and whether or not it would be included in comprehensive health reform legislation.

This should end any confusion regarding hospitals and the assertions made by Messrs Mogulescu and Schultz.

Sincerely,

CNK/rc