

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

May 7, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman
The Honorable Charles Grassley, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus and Ranking Member Grassley:

Your ongoing commitment to reforming America's long term care system is truly commendable. As you know, I share in your commitment and believe long term care reform is essential if we are to realize the goals of health care reform. I have written before about the financial benefits Wisconsin has gained from utilizing home and community-based options (HCBS) under our Family Care program. I also want to be sure you are aware of the significant improvement in health outcomes we have seen in our Family Care consumers as a result of the program.

Wisconsin's progressive tradition is the driving force behind Family Care, our state entitlement program for low-income and disabled adults to receive necessary care, supports, and services in their homes and communities. Utilizing both Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), Family Care provides specific benefits to consumers under a risk-based capitated contract. Consumers' care is directed by a social worker or case manager and a registered nurse working together to develop a personal care plan designed to meet the individual's needs and preferences.

As a result of Family Care's emphasis on personalized care plans, consumers are able to stay healthier and independent longer. Studies of Family Care consumers show a significantly higher utilization of primary care than comparison group counterparts. Consumers also have access to counseling on a variety of topics like nutrition, fitness, and prescription drug management. This leads to reduced hospitalizations and acute care costs, as well as better quality of life for consumers.

Home and community based programs like Family Care provide a template for long term care efforts. Congress has an opportunity to include long term care reform in health reform legislation in a manner that will be both cost-effective and responsive to the needs of millions of Americans.

Again, I thank you for your continued work on behalf of the American people to reform our nation's long term care system, and offer my assistance in the weeks to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Russ Feingold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Russ" and last name "Feingold" clearly distinguishable.

Russell D. Feingold
United States Senate