

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

November 18, 2016

Attendees, Health Care Symposium
Health Reform: Where Are We; Where Are We Going
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear University of Virginia leaders; Jim Pyles and Powers, Pyles, Sutter, and Verville; and
symposium panelists and participants:

Using an interdisciplinary approach such as the one you all are taking is an important way for us to examine the key healthcare issues that Congress may face in the coming year. While there is sure to be partisan rancor ahead, there is much we can agree upon. Above all, we need to focus on improving quality of care, enhancing the so-called 'Triple Aim' of better care, lower costs, and better outcomes for patients. This is particularly true for patients with chronic diseases, because improving quality and access to chronic care is critical to driving any change to the system.

While there is much about healthcare in the next Congress that remains uncertain, one thing is clear. The Affordable Care Act is not perfect, but the idea that we would go back to our previous system is unacceptable. Thanks to the ACA, 20 million more Americans have coverage, and the uninsured rate is below 10 percent for the first time in history. More than 10 million Americans, including 335,000 Virginians, are covered by plans in the exchange. We cannot go back to a time when insurers denied coverage because of pre-existing health conditions, charged women more than men, or dropped someone's coverage when they got sick. The ACA is also deeply integrated into our healthcare system, and no one really believes that we can go back to where we were before.

The ACA was supposed to be only a first step, with Congress making positive fixes to improve upon the law. I was one of the first to engage in a bipartisan way on some of these proposals. While that has not yet happened to date, I am hopeful that in the years to come, we can work in a thoughtful way to protect patient access to care and continue to make strides in improving our healthcare system.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
U.S. Senator