



June 18, 2010

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 736-E
Washington, DC 20201

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the *draft HHS Strategic Framework on Multiple Chronic Conditions (MCC)*. The Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU) is a nonprofit, transdisciplinary organization of clinicians, advocates and health care organizations united in a common mission to improve the health of America's underserved populations and to enhance the development and support of the health care clinicians serving these populations. Thus, our members understand the critical issue of managing multiple chronic conditions and the need to improve the current health care system to better patient care.

The ACU strongly agrees with the goals outlined in the framework. In particular, with regards to Goal 3, "Foster health care and public health system changes to improve the health of individuals with MCC," we believe that a transdisciplinary approach to health care can best meet this challenge. In managing MCC, clinicians must learn how to effectively utilize a support network of health care providers, including community health workers, to deliver comprehensive, preventative primary care. This is especially crucial in underserved populations—these patients not only carry the largest burden of chronic disease with poorer outcomes, but also have limited access to care, limited English proficiency (LEP) and low health literacy. Thus, it is imperative that a network of providers—not just physicians—but also nutrition, behavioral health, social work, physical therapy, nursing, physician assistants, complementary and alternative medicine, the community itself, and any other medium that would work collaboratively towards improving an individuals' health should be incorporated into managing and treating MCC. We further believe that the tools of health information technology (HIT) will greatly assist in the coordination of care and evaluation of effectiveness. We urge HHS to consider the transdisciplinary model of care as an effective patient care management model as it has been demonstrated to achieve improved health outcomes without incurring additional costs.

We appreciate the work that has been done with the framework and look forward to working with HHS with the goal of developing a national plan to effectively manage MCC.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director