



September 2009

These are extraordinary times. Our nation is in the midst of a pivotal conversation about health care reform. Passions are running high, from the halls of Congress to our own kitchen tables. Each of us has a very personal stake in how best to fix our fundamentally broken health care system. Solving this crisis will demand the best in all of us.

Unfortunately, the debate has become polarized. Some of the rhetoric has turned quite ugly. The result is confusion, bitterness and misinformation--none of which moves the discussion forward.

We're increasingly concerned such an atmosphere will cost our nation this chance to make lasting change. There is already broad agreement on key reforms: Everyone must have affordable coverage and access to quality care; insurers must drop pre-existing barriers to coverage; medical care must become more efficient and economical; and the entire system must be simpler and more transparent.

Asuris Northwest Health and its parent company Regence, have advocated these changes for several years. There are questions about specific elements of the reform proposals, including how to pay for them, but our deep commitment to improving the system is unwavering.

It can be difficult to cut through the haze of debate, so we want to share these core truths about Asuris:

- **We are a community of nearly 60,000 right here in eastern Washington.** Pooling resources provides community members financial security and a commitment to be there when help is needed. Over 11,000 members support and encourage each other through myAsuris.com as they face health care challenges and success.
- **We are nonprofit.** Our focus is solely on our members, not shareholders. As a nonprofit, any revenue stays within the community we serve. These dollars are reinvested in educational programs, tools and technology that hold down costs and keep our members healthy for the long-term.
- **Holding down our costs is a top priority.** Over the past several years, we have worked aggressively to control administrative expenses, including salaries and benefits for our employees.
- **Improving health is a significant focus.** During the past five years, we have implemented numerous programs to promote wellness, engaging our members to understand and effectively treat chronic health conditions, and compare the price and effectiveness of treatments and services.
- **We are devoted to real health care reform.** In fact, we'd like to see reform go further--to take on the fundamental cost drivers that make coverage increasingly unaffordable in both the public and private sector.

We believe more than ever that we cannot fail in our current efforts to transform the health care system.

On behalf of all Asuris members--and our employees in eastern Washington who serve them--we thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark B. Ganz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark B. Ganz, Board Member  
Asuris Northwest Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brady Cass", with a stylized, cursive script.

Brady Cass, Director – Eastern Washington  
Asuris Northwest Health