



### **The Physicians Foundation: Health Care Reform Statement**

Most efforts aimed at health care reform lack appropriate perspectives. We often witness policymakers and business executives leading reform without incorporating the voices of patients and the physicians who care for them. When physicians and patients are excluded from health policy decision-making, so are insights into the day-to-day issues surrounding the delivery of high-quality, cost-efficient care. Worse yet, this lack of necessary perspectives leads to unmet patient needs and decreased patient wellbeing. Physicians must have a seat at the table, lives depend on it.

Current reforms being proposed by 2020 presidential candidates aim to expand access to a system that can be incredibly difficult to navigate. Any health care legislative promise must be patient-centric to ensure everyone has the ability to access the most appropriate care for them, in a timely manner, at a care setting of their choosing.

Increasingly, experts agree Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), or the conditions in which people are born, live or grow, greatly influence health outcomes and costs in the U.S. Social determinants must be integrated into all health policies, and should ultimately influence how society organizes, pays for and delivers care. If we want to decrease the cost of health care for Americans, these factors must be accounted for in quality measures and financial incentives – specifically into any new payment model across public and private payors, including state-based reform efforts.

Additionally, if we hope to move the needle on improving the health of all Americans, we must make every effort to preserve physician autonomy and increase their ability to provide input on solutions at the highest levels of health care. Intolerably high regulatory and compliance requirements are already causing a cascade of issues for physicians, which directly impact patient care.

Physicians are the greatest advocates patients have, but they work in a system burdened by regulatory and payment policies that are causing high rates of burnout and greater risk of physician suicide. To address this head on, a successful health care reform plan must ensure physicians are freed from crushing administrative workloads and have healthy work environments, which will enable them to find joy in practicing medicine.

We cannot underestimate how far-reaching and varying the implications of health reform are, so a holistic approach that includes the physicians and patients who will be directly impacted by such change is key.