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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

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[energycommerce.house.gov](http://energycommerce.house.gov)

June 17, 2010

Mr. Gene L. Dodaro  
Acting Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

Members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce have heard testimony that Americans face significant challenges when they seek information about the price and quality of health care services before they visit a doctor. Federal and state governments along with private firms have attempted to address this situation, yet the information available to Americans is often incomplete and outdated. Health insurance companies, government-run health programs and health care providers generally do not provide information to patients about prices prior to providing treatment. The lack of such information can impact an individuals' ability to anticipate their out-of-pocket expenses and to make decisions about where to obtain the greatest value care.

Congress took steps to address this situation through provisions included in the recently enacted *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*. We write to request that GAO conduct a study on the extent to which price information is available to patients, doctors, payers for health care services, and other interested parties. We would like a description of the key initiatives in the public and private sectors that have been undertaken to make available price information, the types of information these programs offer, to whom the information is offered, and the programs' strengths and weaknesses. We are interested in examples of the experiences individual patients face when seeking specific information about the price of their care and services before visiting a doctor or receiving a medical procedure. We hope you can explain if pricing information is easily available, or if individuals would face challenges in obtaining it (including whether there are any remaining legal and regulatory barriers that facilitate or prohibit individuals' access to price information).

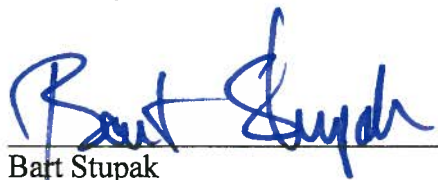
We would like to receive this information as soon as possible and are happy to discuss with you the specific timing of the GAO report and product(s). Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us or to have your staff contact the Committee Minority staff at (202) 225-3641 if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,




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Joe Barton  
Ranking Member




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Bart Stupak  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations



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Michael C. Burgess  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations



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Gene Green  
Member

cc: The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health

The Honorable John Shimkus, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health