



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

DEC 06 2001

TO: John Eisenberg
Jeff Koplan
Bernard Schwetz
Ruth Kirschstein
Tom Scully
Kevin Keane
Eve Slater
Bobby Jindal
D.A. Henderson

FROM: The Secretary

SUBJECT: The Council on Private Sector Initiatives to Improve the Security, Safety, and Quality of Health Care

The ability of the private sector to respond creatively to health security and quality challenges confronting the nation has become even more apparent in the aftermath of the events of September 11. The Department is receiving a number of requests from individuals and firms seeking our review of their ideas for improving the security, safety, and quality of our health care delivery system. The Department needs to foster this creativity by ensuring that we respond systematically and consistently to these requests and provide constructive feedback as appropriate. To facilitate this, today I am establishing a Council on Private Sector Initiatives to Improve the Security, Safety, and Quality of Health Care. This Council will ensure that our focus on public health preparedness is complemented by careful attention to the preparedness of our health care delivery system. This Council will also enhance our responsiveness to innovation by providing the private sector with a single point of contact at the Department.

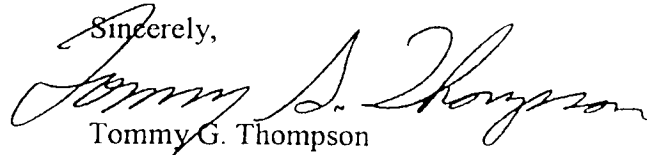
In light of the leadership of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in improving the health care delivery system, I have asked Dr. John Eisenberg, AHRQ's Director, to serve as the Chair of this Council on Private Sector Initiatives. His track record in chairing the Quality Interagency Coordination (QuIC) Task Force and other interagency quality and patient safety activities makes him an ideal choice for this role.

The Council will initially consist of the Heads, or their designees, of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as well as the Assistant Secretary for Health, the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and the Director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness. To ensure appropriate coordination with other relevant Federal Departments, I also plan to invite representation from the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

The Council will refer those requests that fall within the jurisdiction of a single agency. It also will establish procedures to ensure the prompt review and follow-up of requests that involve multiple agencies or those in which agency responsibility is unclear. I will expect you to make appropriate staff available for these multi-agency meetings.

I believe this Council meets an important need and appreciate your cooperation. I look forward to the periodic reports from the Council on the timeliness and disposition of the requests received.

Sincerely,



Tommy G. Thompson