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#### Heart House

2400 N Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037-1153  
USA

202.375.6000

800.253.4636

Fax: 202.375.7000

[www.CardioSource.org](http://www.CardioSource.org)

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John C. Lewin, M.D.

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

As you know, the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and its members have been working for more than 60 years to improve the quality of care provided to patients suffering from cardiovascular disease and to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease in this country. The goals of the *Million Hearts* initiative align perfectly with those of the College, and as such, we are enthusiastic supporters of this new public-private initiative created by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The ACC is working to transform cardiovascular care and to improve heart health through continuous quality improvement, patient-centered care, payment innovation and professionalism. The ACC is a 40,000-member nonprofit medical society comprised of physicians, surgeons, nurses, and other cardiovascular clinicians and bestows credentials upon cardiovascular specialists who meet its stringent qualifications. It is a leader in the formulation of health policy, standards and guidelines and is a staunch supporter of cardiovascular research. The ACC provides professional education and operates national registries for the measurement and improvement of quality care. We are the world's largest source of clinical data in cardiovascular care, tracking 17 million patient records.

We look forward to working together toward our shared aims of reducing cardiovascular events and improving Americans' health and productivity. Outlined below are the ACC's initial proposed contributions to the initiative as a private sector partner.

This quarter, ACC media channels will begin distributing announcements of our participation in the *Million Hearts* campaign, raising the visibility of the initiative among our constituencies. These outlets include *Cardiology* magazine (a bi-monthly publication with 33,000 subscribers), the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* (this country and the world's most widely read cardiovascular journal with 44,000 subscribers), the Cardiosource website (over 227,000 monthly page views) and regular email newsletters.

Future distributions through these channels could include modular best practices for cardiologists, timely calls to action in conjunction with *Million Hearts*, toolkits around specific disease states, and results from registry-based monitoring of

*The mission of the American College of Cardiology is to advocate for quality cardiovascular care — through education, research promotion, development and application of standards and guidelines — and to influence health care policy.*

progress toward the goals of the *Million Hearts* initiative. In addition, nearly 4,500 ACC members are Cardiac Care Associates, a designation that includes nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and pharmacists. Members of the cardiac care team can be specially targeted with toolkits, communications, and education materials. We will also partner with other related groups already committed to participating in *Million Hearts* in the development of materials for specific segments of ACC membership.

Two additional ACC assets will immediately be aligned with the *Million Hearts* initiative. The first is the PINNACLE Registry® and its sister PINNACLE Network™. The PINNACLE Registry is the nation's largest ambulatory database and quality improvement program, focusing on the treatment of the four major managed cardiovascular conditions: coronary artery disease; hypertension; heart failure and atrial fibrillation. The PINNACLE Network is a related community of outpatient providers committed to quality improvement and best practice sharing. The registry now boasts over two million individual patient care records and collects data from over one thousand cardiology practices around the country. The PINNACLE Registry has been qualified as Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) reporting option since the inception of registry reporting in 2008. For the 2010 PQRS reporting period, the registry submitted data to CMS for nearly 600 cardiology providers, covering 14 outpatient quality performance measures.

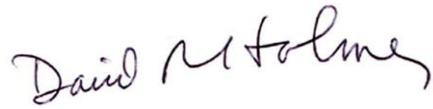
Patient data elements collected by the PINNACLE Registry include information on aspirin and other anti-platelet prescriptions, blood pressure measures, smoking status and cessation consulting, height and weight, lipid panels, and diabetes screening. The PINNACLE performance measures calculated using these elements can be harmonized with those measures used to monitor progress toward the goals of the *Million Hearts* campaign. The PINNACLE Registry and PINNACLE Network provider communities both can receive regular communications around our shared performance improvement goals and the 3-year-old network is growing rapidly.

Further, the PINNACLE Registry's flexible technology platform could be employed to show early results for the *Million Hearts* initiative, beginning with a pre-intervention national report on target measures and followed by regular reporting at six-month intervals. Preliminary work on this approach has already begun. ACC staff will be meeting via teleconference on Oct 14 with CDC staff to discuss the Million Hearts ABCS measures, opportunities for alignment, and possible baseline reporting.

The second ACC asset aligned with the goals of *Million Hearts* is CardioSmart, a patient-focused web-based offering. CardioSmart is a comprehensive program that provides everyday strategies for healthy living to patients and consumers. By empowering patients and consumers to take ownership of their lifestyle choices and medical treatment, the CardioSmart program can help increase positive outcomes and raise the level of care in the United States. CardioSmart focuses on the choices people make throughout their day relating to diet, exercise, adherence to medication and smoking cessation, and how those choices impact health and wellness.

The ideas and plans outlined in this letter are the result of our first planning meeting on the ACC's potential contributions to *Million Hearts*. We are certain that more ideas will be forthcoming as the news of the ACC's participation in and support of *Million Hearts* reaches our members. The ACC appreciates the opportunity to contribute to *Million Hearts*, and we look forward to working together on this important initiative and to help achieve the lofty goals of this program.

Sincerely,



David R. Holmes, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.C.  
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Centers for Disease Control

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Executive Director  
Million Hearts