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Good morning. My name is Margaret DiVirgilio and I am here today representing a large employer located in western Pennsylvania. I am the Chief Financial Officer for Concurrent Technologies Corporation (CTC). We are an independent, nonprofit, applied scientific research and development professional services organization that provides management and technology-based solutions.

CTC employs 1100 employees, most of who are based in western Pennsylvania. Health insurance is an important benefit that we provide to our employees and, as you can imagine, the cost of health care is very important to us. Our plan is self-funded and administered by Highmark. We offer our employees a choice of medical plan options from a high option plan down to a high deductible health plan to ensure employees are able to choose a medical plan that best suits their circumstances and needs. As an employer who provides benefits for our employees, it is very important to us that we offer our employees a selection of plans to pick from to ensure we are offering health insurance security, which is one of the key goals of our employee benefits program. CTC is committed to providing our employees an outstanding benefits program while ensuring costs are reasonable both for our employees and for the Company.

As the CFO, I have the responsibility of managing the financial risks of the corporation. That is why stability and predictability in health care costs and health insurance costs are important to our business. I do not want to face sudden increases due to unforeseen events, such as a health system unexpectedly raising cost for medical care that my employees receive, which ultimately leads to higher health insurance costs.

Ensuring that our employees have access to efficient health care providers that can provide high-quality care at a reasonable cost is also important not only to our employees' well-being, but to our corporation's bottom line. When our employees have access to the highest-quality and most convenient health care resources in the community, that in turn will maintain employee morale, and provide a more secure recruitment and retention mechanism.

For the last several years we have watched the ongoing dispute between UPMC and Highmark with great interest and concern because of the impact it will have on our employees' access to care and on the affordability of that care. Given the current state of affairs, it is clear to me, and it should be clear to everyone else, that the problem we face in western Pennsylvania is not going to be resolved unless government intervenes.

I am not an expert in public policy nor do I have expertise in the delivery of health care. But I do understand business and finances and I am very concerned about the impact UPMC closing its doors to patients across the region will have on our employees' access to care and to the cost of providing that care. Just as CTC provides a choice of medical plan options for our employees, that choice should continue with health care providers.

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As a business person, I also don't typically subscribe to the idea that government intervention should be the first place to turn to solve problems in the private sector. But in this situation, I think the government appears to be the only one that can step in, correct the market behavior and protect consumers.

The government has a role to play in ensuring that patients are not turned away from not-for-profit, charitable health care institutions. The government has a role to play in ensuring that the private marketplace operates effectively to control medical costs. If this legislation presents a way forward so that patients aren't faced with the prospect of being turned away from their doctor or hospital, and that large health systems don't unnecessarily drive up costs, then it is certainly time to consider taking action.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today.