

September 23, 2004

Dear friends,

I am writing to share with you – our longtime friends and colleagues – some significant decisions about FACCT’s future. In late 2003, the FACCT Board and staff decided that our work should come to an end and that we would aim to cease operations at the end of 2004. We have been taking deliberate steps to wind down our activities over the past six months and are on track for ending operations late this year.

FACCT was created in 1995 to fill a particular niche at a particular time. We wanted to bring a fresh emphasis on health outcomes and patient experience to the emerging quality measurement field and to advocate for broader public reporting of quality information at all levels. We played a small part in a much larger movement and we are gratified that many of our goals have been broadly accepted and realized. The National Quality Forum’s emergence as a central standard-setting body, CMS’ commitment to public reporting, energetic work by many state governments and business coalitions, and work in Congress to encourage public reporting of safety and quality data have brought many of our concerns into the mainstream.

As we saw progress in some areas – and continuing challenges in others – we shifted our attention to developing a greater understanding of how patients and consumers could play a more influential role in shaping the health care system. Since 1999, FACCT has emphasized consumer research and the development of tools to support greater public engagement – including websites, educational materials, and networking among consumer groups. Increasingly, we have seen that the next key opportunity will lie in providing information directly to individual Americans – a job that is well beyond our scope or original design. While a great deal remains to be done to advance our ideas for a transformed health care system, we concluded that FACCT was not the best vehicle to continue that work.

We created FACCT as an expression of purchaser and consumer needs in one focused arena – quality measurement – and intended for ourselves only a three to five year commitment. Instead we hung around for nine years and tried to make a contribution to the thinking and debate about changing U.S. health care. All of us – current and past trustees and

staff, our thousands of friends, colleagues, clients, and partners – will continue to work on improving the health system through other channels.

As of September 1, I have stepped down as FACCT's President and accepted a position on the Board of Trustees, so that I can continue to assist in the wrap-up of FACCT's activities. I am very pleased to report that I have taken a position at the Markle Foundation in New York as a director of its health program. The Markle health program, with its strong focus on the public benefits of information and communications technology, will also be addressing some of FACCT's historic concerns. In addition, Markle has agreed to host some of the key content from FACCT's web site to ensure that our body of work continues to be available to the public.

Such influence as FACCT has had is entirely due to the support we have received from you and so many others. We uncovered a profound agreement across society about the need for change, and widespread acceptance of many of the principles that should underlie system transformation. We had the very gratifying role of articulating that agreement and translating it into a few products and tools.

On behalf of the FACCT Board, I thank you for your support and your own commitment to improving our health system's ability to meet the needs of all Americans. Please look over the attached information sheet, and do not hesitate to drop me a note if you have any questions or just to stay in touch.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Lansky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Lansky, Ph.D.
President

Frequently Asked Questions about FACCT's Transition

Why are you closing down?

We no longer feel we can make a distinctive contribution to health care reform. Other organizations have assumed some of our past roles, and we are not structured appropriately to undertake the major grassroots campaign that's probably needed next. We considered shifting towards a consulting model but decided such a shift would be inconsistent with our mission, history, and capabilities.

When are you closing down?

We expect to end program operations on December 31, 2004. Part of the transition process will include transferring some programs and licenses to other organizations for long-term support. We are in touch with all of the affected parties to ensure continuity of those programs.

How is FACCT being managed?

Josh Lemieux, who has been director of FACCT's Personal Health Record research program, is now Executive Director of FACCT with overall management responsibility. David Lansky and the other Board members are working closely with him to ensure continuity.

Where are the staff going?

Most staff members have gradually left FACCT as their programs have wound down over the past year. David Lansky has assumed a position at the Markle Foundation (New York) and will continue to serve FACCT as a member of its Board.

What's happening to your website and clearinghouse?

The principal website, www.facct.org, will not be available after December 2004. However, much of the frequently accessed content will be available through the Markle Foundation's web site – www.markle.org. An announcement on the timing of the switch to the new site will be made later in the Fall.

How can I continue to get information about FACCT measures and other products?

The best way to access FACCT materials will be through the on-line clearinghouse after it is transferred to the Markle Foundation's website. You can continue to contact David Lansky at dlansky@facct.org into 2005 and he will try to connect you to appropriate resources.

What's happening to CompareYourCare?

We are making arrangements to ensure that current licensees continue to receive uninterrupted support. Questions can be directed to Josh Lemieux at jlemieux@facct.org.