**New Study Shows Americans Are Concerned About How Hospital Mergers and Acquisitions Will Impact Their Care**

*Older Americans Are Most Concerned by Loss of Independent Physicians Due to Hospital Purchases*

**CHICAGO, IL, December 3, 2018** – LUGPA, today released a new national survey of 1,191 adults that revealed more than sixty percent of adult Americans are concerned about the impact of hospital mergers and acquisitions on their access to affordable care, with 25 percent reporting that this increasing trend is a threat to their health. Additionally, the survey found that patients trust smaller enterprises, such as independent physicians, more so than those employed by hospital systems. The survey was conducted by international polling firm, YouGov, for LUGPA, the leading voice of independent urology group practices in the U.S., to better understand the impact of increasing rates of hospital mergers and acquisitions on patients.

The poll also revealed more than two-thirds of American adults want a solution to the growing trend of hospital purchases of independent practices, and the single most desired solution is requiring insurers to compensate all medical practices equally, a concept known as “site-neutral payments.”

Additional responses show that a multitude (36 percent) of Americans think Congress should take action by either doing more to incentivize independent physicians and level the playing field with hospitals, or to regulate hospital purchases of independent practices to prevent them from gaining excessive market share. This data further substantiates concerns surrounding hospital acquisitions and the need to address the growing number of monopolies controlling local and state hospitals. In addition to this poll, multiple studies have shown that consolidation under hospitals increases prices and reduces options for purchasers of health services, which includes individual patients, self-insured businesses, insurers and government programs. Even worse, less competition has been shown to affect care quality.

“Not only are independent physicians across the country negatively affected by growing consolidation under hospitals, the public is aware of the consequences at an individual level,” said Richard G. Harris, MD, president of LUGPA. “Given the rapidly increasing rate of hospital mergers and acquisitions, patients will continue to feel the pain in their wallets and in their quality of care. Congress has begun to take notice of the public health impact, and we encourage them to continue building on site-of-service reforms, so that patients pay the same amount for a service regardless of where it is performed or if that practice was acquired by a hospital.”

Other notable findings include:

* **Sixty-five percent of respondents trust an independent physician** to give them the best recommendation over a hospital-employed physician.
* **Sixty-nine percent** of respondents think some kind of **action should be taken** by the government to prevent the continued trend of hospital mergers and acquisitions.
* Americans are most likely to associate independent, doctor-owned medical practices with **personalized, patient-focused care**. They also associate independent medical practices with trustworthiness and high quality.
* The majority of Americans are **concerned about consolidation under hospitals**; and for older Americans, the main reason is the impact this consolidation is having on getting the care they want and need.

“While these results do not come as a surprise to those of us who live with these issues every day, we are encouraged by the public’s awareness of the problem and we’re working with Congress on implementing solutions,” said Dr. Harris. “LUGPA members remain committed to preserving and promoting the ability of independent physician practices and specialty providers to deliver quality care. We are pleased to see that the majority of Americans hold this same value and continue to trust in us to provide high quality care at an affordable cost.”

The survey was conducted to collect opinions from the public about value, access and personalized care in today’s rapidly changing healthcare marketplace. Because existing payment practices by the government and insurance companies make it more difficult for independent physicians to compete with hospital monopolies, LUGPA believes payors need to better understand how Americans want to receive their care and from whom.

For more information on the survey and to view the complete results, visit [link].

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***About LUGPA***
*LUGPA is a trade association that represents independent urology group practices in the U.S., with more than 2,300 physicians who make up more than 25 percent of the nation’s practicing urologists, and provide more than 30 percent of the total urologic care in the U.S. The Association is committed to providing the best resources and information for its member practices through advocacy, research, data collection and benchmarking efforts. LUGPA advocates for independent urology practices by promoting quality clinical outcomes, fostering new opportunities and improving advocacy in the legislative and regulatory arenas. For more information, visit lugpa.org.*

***About the YouGov survey****All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,191 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between August 27-28, 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all US adults (aged 18+).*