

PARCA

Ensuring Patients' Access to Care

June 10, 2009

Sen. Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Charles Grassley
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Edward Kennedy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education
Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Michael Enzi
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education
Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The *Patients' Access to Responsible Care Alliance* (PARCA), comprised of organizations representing healthcare providers, wishes to offer our sincere thanks for your commitment to address the critical issue of national health reform.

As our organizations collectively represent the interests of hundreds of thousands of healthcare professionals and the patients they serve, we are keenly aware of the many complex problems related to healthcare coverage, delivery, and costs that currently exist within the nation's healthcare system. As you proceed with substantive efforts to vastly improve our current system and provide quality care to all Americans, we pledge our support for our commonly shared goals of expanding access to and affordability of quality healthcare services.

The undersigned organizations call your attention to the fact that, in today's delivery system, health plans routinely discriminate against whole classes of healthcare providers based solely on their licensure or certification. We believe such discrimination is not only wrong in principle, but is anti-competitive in nature, limits or even denies patient choice and access to a range of beneficial providers, and in general, results in a less than ideal and optimal delivery system.

As you go about the important work of improving the existing employer-based system of coverage, and work to establish new protections related to pre-existing conditions, patient health status, transparency and other important features of reform, we request that you lend your support to the adoption of appropriate legislative provisions that would prevent existing healthcare plans, as well as any new public or private plans, from discriminating against classes of healthcare providers with respect to plan participation, indemnification,

and reimbursement based on the type of health provider, and the professional's licensure or certification.

The elimination of such discrimination for all providers would more appropriately focus the provisioning of patient care towards meeting the goals of the majority of this Congress and the President. We believe the health professionals we represent can help increase access to quality care, can aid in prevention of diseases and their complications, and play a critical role in chronic care management.

The PARCA Coalition has developed the following language, successfully incorporated into the Medicare statute in 1997, that we would like included in the health reform bills currently being discussed in your committees.

SEC. __. PROHIBITION ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act (or an amendment made by this Act), a health insurance issuer to which this Act (or amendment) applies shall not discriminate with respect to participation, reimbursement, covered services or indemnification under a health plan or other health insurance coverage against any health care provider who is acting within the scope of that provider's license or certification under applicable State law.

We look forward to working with you to address the non-discrimination issue in a comprehensive way, ensuring all individuals receive the care they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

The Patients' Access to Responsible Care Alliance

- American Academy of Audiology
- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
- American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
- American Chiropractic Association
- American College of Nurse Midwives
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- American Optometric Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Podiatric Medical Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- National Association of Social Workers

CC: Representative Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
Representative Charlie Rangel
Representative Pete Stark
Representative Henry Waxman
Representative Frank Pallone

PARCA is a coalition of organizations that represent the interests of millions of patients and non-MD/DO healthcare providers. It aims to provide federal policymakers with access to information from all areas of the healthcare community, in order to assist in the formulation of responsible, well-rounded healthcare policy. The coalition is committed to quality, cost-effective care, and ensuring patients have options in the delivery of such care.

Contact: Brian R. Bullard, Chair
Patients Access to Responsible Care Alliance
c/o AANA
25 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 550
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 484-8400