

March 16, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

Representing the interests of patients, consumers and health care providers, the undersigned organizations commend your leadership in working towards a bipartisan agreement on a permanent SGR fix. Although we support these efforts, we remain concerned that a permanent solution to the Medicare therapy cap is not being addressed appropriately. This issue has historically moved through Congress along with legislation on the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR). As a Medicare “extender” we believe the therapy cap differs from others in that it has a direct impact on patient access to necessary rehabilitation services.

In the last Congressional session, legislation to repeal the therapy caps enjoyed a bipartisan majority of support in the House with 225 cosponsors and garnered the support of more than one-third of the Senate. In addition, a permanent solution to this policy was nearly accomplished with provisions to repeal and reform the therapy cap included in Senate SGR legislation last year. This policy was negotiated by the three committees of jurisdiction and supported by the entire therapy stakeholder community. Not only did that policy repeal the therapy cap, but it also included a policy alternative that would more appropriately control utilization. Including this provision lowered the cost score by a third.

Completing this legislation before the March 31st deadline provides an opportunity to end the pattern of yearly extensions that puts access to medically necessary therapy for 1 million Medicare beneficiaries at risk. Including a long-term therapy cap solution in the larger SGR package will ensure that Medicare beneficiaries will continue to have access to these vital services.

We request that you ensure that this important beneficiary access issue is included in any Medicare SGR legislation – and ensure that whatever the timeframe is for an SGR fix – permanent or short-term – that the same time frame be extended to addressing the therapy caps.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American College of Rheumatology
American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

American Physical Therapy Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Speech–Language–Hearing Association
Arthritis Foundation
Assisted Living Federation of America
Brain Injury Association of America
Easter Seals
Focus On Therapeutic Outcomes, Inc.
LeadingAge
National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies
National Association for the Support of Long Term Care
National Coalition on Health Care
National Disability Rights Network
National Stroke Association
Parkinson's Action Network
Private Practice Section/APTA
PTPN (Physical Therapy Provider Network)
United Spinal Association

Cc: Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Chairs and Ranking Members