



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

May 26, 2011

The Honorable John Conyers
United States House of Representatives
2426 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Paul
United States House of Representatives
203 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Conyers and Paul:

As the Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance), our mission is to advocate for sound federal health care policy that fosters patient access to the highest quality specialty care. As patient and physician advocates, the Alliance extends our strong support of your legislation, H.R. 1409, the “Quality Health Care Coalition Act of 2011,” which would allow health care professionals to voluntarily band together to negotiate as a group with health insurers without fear of violating antitrust laws.

The current antitrust landscape strictly prohibits negotiations between independent health care professionals and health plans. In fact, independent physicians cannot even discuss reimbursements or share their fee schedules without violating antitrust laws. This results in a “woefully unbalanced” playing field, whereby small and individual physician practices are at the mercy of large health insurers.

As you know, the unfair market power of health insurance companies cannot be matched by small physician practices; therefore, these practices are forced to “take it or leave it” when it comes to contractual terms, reimbursement policies and fee schedules. The imposition of one-sided, non-negotiated contracts onto physicians has gone on for far too long, and the undersigned organizations of the Alliance wish to extend our endorsement of your well-constructed legislation.

If enacted, the Quality Health Care Coalition Act of 2011 will benefit physicians and patients alike. HR 1409 would allow physicians to negotiate better contracts, which, in turn, will enable them to deliver high-quality health services and protect patient safety.

For these reasons, the undersigned organizations of the Alliance extend our strong support of your legislation, H.R. 1409.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urological Association
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Heart Rhythm Society
National Association of Spine Specialists
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

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