

A Coalition of 14 Medical Societies Representing more than 200,000 Specialty Physicians in the United States

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The Honorable John Dingell Ranking Member House Energy and Commerce Committee 2328 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Dingell:

On behalf of the Alliance of Specialty Medicine, a coalition of fourteen medical societies representing more than 200,000 specialty care physicians in the United States, we are writing to thank you for your leadership in authoring H.R. 4628, the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 2004.

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine and its members have long advocated for improved access to quality specialty care for patients. The Alliance continues to believe that the patient protections contained in H.R. 4628 such as access to emergency care, access to specialty care, access to clinical trials, direct access to obstetricians and gynecologists, and guarantees to sound and timely internal and external appeals processes are critical components for all patients enrolled in managed care plans.

Although the health care market has changed since the managed care reform debate first began, the Alliance still believes that patients should be provided with a blanket of protections that guarantee access, choice and accountability. Unfortunately, today, patient access to specialty care is also being hampered by the rising costs of medical liability premiums that are exacerbated by declining Medicare reimbursements. We believe that these issues must be addressed in a comprehensive manner to ensure that patients have access to the care they need when they need it.

We look forward to working with you on H.R. 4628 and other important health care policy issues and as always, we commend you for your leadership in advocating for patients' access to affordable quality health care. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Bonta at pbonta@aad.org or (202) 842-3555 or Kathleen Teixeira at kteixeira@gastro.org, Co-Chairs of the Alliance's Patients' Bill of Rights Workgroup.

Sincerely.

American Academy of Dermatology Association

American Association of Neurological Surgeons/Congress of Neurological Surgeons

American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons

American College of Cardiology

American College of Emergency Physicians

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Radiology Association

American Gastroenterological Association

American Society for Clinical Pathology

American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology

American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery

American Urological Association

National Association of Spine Specialists

Society of Thoracic Surgeons