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July 25, 2007

Federal Affairs Department

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, I am writing to express our support for the *Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP Act)* of 2007. The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons – Eye M.D.s. – with more than 27,000 members worldwide. More than 93 percent of over 17,000 practicing Eye M.D.s in the United States are members of the Academy.

The Champ Act is an important step to improving access to health care for children. In addition, the legislation works to stabilize the Medicare program by halting devastating payment cuts physicians face in the immediate future. The guaranteed .5 percent update for 2008 and 2009 are key steps in preserving access to care for Medicare beneficiaries across the country. While continuation of expenditure targets is not recommended by MedPAC, establishment of separate spending targets is a far more equitable approach than the current system. In addition, the Academy appreciates the effort to improve the long-term outlook for physicians under Medicare, particularly the decision to eliminate drugs from the targets as well as recognition of new coverage decisions. We understand that this is an interim solution and one that will continue to require Congressional intervention prior to 2010.

Again, the Academy appreciates your leadership on this important issue and is pleased to work with you to advance the legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael X. Repka, MD
Secretariat for Federal Affairs
American Academy of Ophthalmology