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July 31, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell  
Chair, Energy and Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Dingell and Rangel:

On behalf of the 23,000 osteopathic family physicians represented by the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP), I am pleased to inform you of our strong support for the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act of 2007.

Your legislation addresses three key issues of importance to the ACOFP. CHAMP also takes great steps toward addressing the broader healthcare needs of our nation and implements improvements that are necessary to strengthen the entire system. The vital issues in your legislation that are of prime importance to the ACOFP are reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), stabilizing the flawed Medicare physician payment system, and addressing the unique needs of rural physicians.

We believe that it goes without saying that the health of our children is and should be of vital importance to Congress. The SCHIP program has been remarkably successful over the last ten years and is preparing to expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Your timely legislation provides insurance to children of our nation who are in the most need. In addition, outreach and education are expanded in order to enroll the greatest number of eligible children.

It is the ACOFP's strong belief that access to quality care is of utmost importance to our seniors. The flawed physician payment system is contributing to decreased access to physicians. This is simply unacceptable, and your legislation takes great strides to fix the broken system. We appreciate your decision to address the long term solvency of the payment system by not only preventing this years scheduled 9.9 percent cut, but by also preventing the projected 5 percent cut for 2009. The ACOFP believes that physicians should receive positive updates and your legislation provides for this. We are also pleased with the pathway provided to eliminate the sustainable growth rate and replace it with a more equitable and stable payment system.

Additionally, the ACOFP is a strong proponent of the patient-centered medical home concept. We feel that it has strong merits and potential to drastically transform the delivery of care to the patients we serve. We applaud your inclusion of a medical home demonstration project in your legislation. Moreover, the ACOFP and its members look forward to working with you in the implementation of this project.

Finally, the needs of rural physicians must be addressed in order to preserve access for those in rural America. Your legislation includes provisions that we support to extend GPCI and scarcity provisions for the next two years. As an organization that represents a great percentage of rural family practice physicians, we thank you for taking this important step.

Again, thank you for your leadership and work on these very important issues. The ACOFP and its members stand united in support for the CHAMP Act of 2007.

Sincerely,



Steven F. Rubin, D.O. FACOFP dist.  
ACOFPP President