

June 2, 2008

The Honorable Herbert Kohl
Chairman
Special Committee on Aging
G31 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we commend you for your leadership and offer our support for S. 2029, the “Physician Payments Sunshine Act,” as revised. We believe that the bill will reinforce the public’s trust in the medical profession and uphold the ethical standards that medicine has in place to govern the interaction between physicians and the pharmaceutical and medical device industries.

A central tenet of the medical profession is that treatment must be based on the best medical interests of patients. As a result, a physician’s prescribing must be consistent with the latest scientific information and the physician’s medical judgment. Physician prescribing decisions are heavily dependent on the quality of the scientific information available, provided to them, in part, by industry and federal regulators. When the information is accurate, complete, and free of conflicts-of-interest, physicians have the necessary tools to make the right prescribing decisions that promote patient health.

We believe that the Physician Payments Sunshine Act would establish a framework that allows patients, researchers, physicians, and others to obtain accurate and complete information on the nature of interactions between industry and physicians. S. 2029, as revised, will establish a national reporting standard and includes important mechanisms—such as the opportunity for physicians to correct erroneous, false, or otherwise misleading information—so patients and others can reasonably rely on the quality of the reporting in the proposed public database. This is an important transparency initiative that will enhance the medical profession’s ability to provide oversight and strengthen our ability to serve as stewards of medicine.

We appreciate your leadership and we look forward to working with you to achieve our mutual goal of preserving the public’s trust in the medical profession and ensuring that the interactions between physicians and industry benefit patients.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Association of Neurological Surgeons

American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Radiology
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Medical Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urological Association
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Heart Rhythm Society
National Hispanic Medical Association
North American Spine Society
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society of Interventional Radiology