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U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Commerce

Room 2125, Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515-6115  
May 11, 1999

JAMES E. DERDERIAN, CHIEF OF STAFF

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515


Dear John:

I am responding to your letter of April 28, 1999 regarding the Committee's process to address managed care legislation. I share your views that this legislation is important. The Committee is focused on the managed care hearing schedule with a great deal of urgency.

As you may recall we started early in this Congress to meet and to discuss the Committee's consideration of patient protections and managed care reform issues, including a number of specific issues such as emergency room care, access to pediatric specialists, access to OB/GYN specialists, and patient information matters. At that time, your views on process were accommodated. With a goal of bipartisanship, such accommodation remains an important objective as we proceed.

I share your views that hearings are in order and should commence at once. Since the hearings most likely will be conducted throughout the summer, it is unlikely that the target dates you set forth in your letter will be reached. What is most important is that the issues be heard and the Members be afforded a fair and deliberative process. I am mindful of my commitment to work with you in the coming weeks and to make every effort to continue in consultation with you. Surely you agree that our mutual objectives, to pass legislation to improve patient protections and reform managed care, are best served by continuing to work together on these important issues.

Sincerely,

  
Tom Bliley  
Chairman