

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
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July 25, 2007

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

Dear Chairman Dingell,

On behalf of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), representing nearly 4,000 practicing neurosurgeons in the United States, we are pleased to support H.R. 3162, the "Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007," which will improve access to healthcare for our nation's children and Medicare beneficiaries. If enacted, this bill would make a number of improvements to the Medicare program including:

- Preventing the 10 percent Medicare payment cut physicians face in 2008 and the 5 percent cut in 2009 and replacing those cuts with .5% payment increases in both 2008 and 2009;
- Repealing the flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and replacing it with a new physician payment system based on six categories of services, which we believe will more accurately reflect the delivery of Medicare services; and
- Eliminating funding for the Medicare Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI), which we believe does nothing to actually measure and improve surgical quality.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, it is imperative that we begin to stabilize the physician payment system to ensure that our Medicare patients continue to receive timely access to quality neurosurgical care. This legislation is a good first step in the right direction and we look forward to working with you to find ways to prevent additional payment cuts that are scheduled to occur in 2010 and beyond.

Again, many thanks for all your hard work on this legislation. We stand ready to assist you in moving this forward through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Jon H. Robertson, MD, President
American Association of Neurological Surgeons

Douglas Kondziolka, MD, FACS, President
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