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August 6, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell  
Chairman  
House Ways and Means Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20005

The Honorable Charlie Rangel  
Chairman  
House Energy and Commerce Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20005

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Health Subcommittee  
House Energy and Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20005

The Honorable Pete Stark  
Chairman  
Health Subcommittee  
House Ways and Means Committee  
1135 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Chairmen Dingell, Rangel, Pallone and Stark:

The American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM) would like to **thank you**, the House Ways and Means Committee and the House Energy & Commerce Committee, for all the work that you put into the passage of the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) bill last week! We, in particular, want to thank **Bridgett Taylor, Amy Hall, Chad Shearer, Yvette Fontenot, Debbie Curtis, Cybele Bjorklund, Purvee Kempf, Christie Houlihan, and Heather Foster** for all their tireless dedication and commitment to getting this through, working with such thoughtful and diligent attention to the various provisions that were so very much important to our patients and others like them.

AAHIVM represents 2000 physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners who specialize in HIV medicine. This bill would significantly cover more children who are in need of health care, while also enhancing the larger Medicare and Medicaid programs for many other populations, such as those with disabilities. We are particularly grateful for those changes that will improve access to lifesaving care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS across the U.S. and are further supportive of the many other provisions in the bill that improve the Medicaid and Medicare for low-income and disabled populations for whom often no other healthcare safety net exists.

We very much want to recognize and applaud your leadership in including a number of provisions that significantly help our patients, as well as numerous other patient populations including

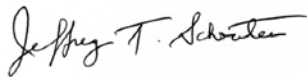
- Including costs incurred by AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs) and Indian Health Service in providing prescription drugs toward the annual out of pocket threshold under Part D.
- Codification of special protections for six protected drug classifications, including HIV Antiretrovirals.
- State option to expand or add coverage of certain pregnant women under CHIP.
- Parity for mental health coinsurance.
- Improving assets tests for Medicare savings program and low-income subsidy program
- Elimination of part D cost-sharing for certain non-institutionalized full-benefit dual eligible individuals
- Cost-sharing protections for low-income subsidy-eligible individuals.
- Permitting mid-year changes in enrollment for formulary changes that adversely impact an enrollee.
- Removal of exclusion of benzodiazepines from required coverage under the Medicare prescription drug program.
- Authority to continue providing adult day health services approved under a State Medicaid Plan.
- State option to protect community spouses of individuals with disabilities

The American Academy of HIV Medicine is also pleased to see a provision in this bill to protect Medicare reimbursements for physicians at their current level. Physician compensation already represents a dire hindrance in the domestic battle against HIV/AIDS, as doctors are not making enough money to keep their practices afloat. Specific to Medicare, a significant proportion of care and treatment for people with HIV disease is performed under the Medicare delivery system. Nearly 20% of all federal spending on HIV care and treatment is expended through the Medicare program, and yet less than 2% of total HIV Medicare payments or only \$360/patient annually, goes towards paying health care providers.

Again, this bill will significantly enhance the delivery of HIV clinical care to our patients. It will be a very difficult fight to retain these provisions in the conference bill with the Senate. We will do whatever we can to assist you in keeping these provisions alive for that conference package. Thank you so much for your extensive leadership on all of the above issues.

If we may be of service to you as this process continues, please contact Greg Smiley, Director of Public Policy for AAHIVM, at (202) 659-0699 or [greg@aahivm.org](mailto:greg@aahivm.org).

Sincerely,



Jeff Schouten, M.D.  
Chair  
American Academy of HIV Medicine