

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION

August 23, 1999

The Honorable Charles Norwood
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Independence & New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20515



Dear Congressman Norwood:

The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R) is a national medical specialty association representing more than 5,500 physicians who specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation. These board certified physicians provide diagnostic and therapeutic services to inpatients and outpatients with disabling conditions such as stroke, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, amputations, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and back pain.

The Academy is writing on behalf of its members to indicate its endorsement of patients' protection legislation introduced by you and Congressman Dingell. HR 2723, the Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999, is a strong comprehensive patients' bill of rights that delivers the essential protections patients need.

Specifically, the AAPM&R supports provisions in HR 2723 that would:

- *apply all patient protections to all health plans including ERISA plans;*
- *allow a patient to have continued access to a specialist to treat a chronic condition;*
- *allow doctors to prescribe off a plan's drug formulary when a non-formulary drug is medically indicated. The bill gives patients greater access to approved clinical trials;*
- *require binding, independent, external appeals using an objective standard of professional medical practice;*

The AAPM&R applauds your efforts, and those of Congressman Dingell, for introducing this important legislation. If the Academy can provide any assistance that would help to ensure enactment of this legislation, please do not hesitate to call on us. Richard E. Verville, the Academy's Washington Representative, can be reached at (202) 466-6550.

Sincerely,

John L. Melvin, MD
President

c: Richard E. Verville, JD

President
John L. Melvin, MD
MossRehab Hospital
1200 West Tabor Road
Philadelphia, PA 19141-3099
Telephone (215) 456-9554
Fax (215) 456-9084
E-mail: jlmelvin@aehn2.einstein.edu

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One IBM Plaza, Suite 2500
Chicago, IL 60611-3604
Telephone (312) 464-9700
Fax (312) 464-0227
E-mail: info@aapmr.org
www.aapmr.org