



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CATARACT  
AND REFRACTIVE SURGERY

May 6, 2011

The Honorable Tom Price, MD  
U.S. House of Representatives  
403 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Price:

On behalf of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS), an international, educational, and scientific organization whose nearly 10,000 member ophthalmologists specialize in cataract and refractive surgery, I am writing to express our thanks for introducing H.R. 1700, the "Medicare Patient Empowerment Act" and offer our strong support for this legislation.

As you are aware, the continued failure to provide a permanent solution to the flawed Medicare physician payment system has resulted in years of temporary, short-term fixes that have exacerbated both the magnitude of the future pending reductions and cost for replacing the system, in addition to jeopardizing access to medical care for our nation's elderly and disabled. That is why ASCRS strongly believes that in addition to replacing the current Medicare physician payment system, Congress should empower patients to obtain medical services from the physician of their choice by adopting additional Medicare payment options in conjunction with a new payment system. Your legislation creates a patient-centered option that will ensure patients have access to the medical care that they need and deserve.

The Medicare Patient Empowerment Act will allow patient and physicians to freely contract, without penalty, for Medicare services. Beneficiaries would still be able to use their Medicare benefits and physicians would be allowed to bill the patient for all amounts not covered by Medicare without being forced to opt-out of Medicare for two years, as is the current law. Much like a private health insurance plan out-of-network benefit, this new option would enhance patient access to the physician of their choice.

We appreciate your commitment to this important issue and, once again, thank you for introducing H.R. 1700. ASCRS is committed to working with you to achieve passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward J. Holland". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Edward J. Holland, MD  
President

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