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The Honorable John Dingell  
Chair  
House Energy and Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the 15,000 members of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA), I am writing to thank you for your leadership in crafting H.R. 3162, the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act that will ensure access to health care for our nation's children and seniors. We recognize the challenges in compiling this much needed legislation and are pleased to express our support for its passage.

The AGA acknowledges the dedication of you and your staff in drafting a proposal that will prevent a scheduled 9.9 percent reduction in physician payments in 2008 and provide two years of positive updates. The CHAMP Act would remove physician-administered drugs from the physician expenditure target prospectively and treat new coverage decisions as changes in law and regulation, thus more accurately accounting for these services in the expenditure target. H.R. 3162 would also repeal the SGR in 2010 and transition the Medicare physician formula to a new system based on six categories of services. We firmly believe that these two years of relief will not only provide stability to the program but also enable gastroenterologists to continue to provide Medicare beneficiaries the high quality care that they deserve.

We are also pleased that the CHAMP Act includes language that waives the deductibles and coinsurance for preventive screening benefits under Medicare, like colorectal cancer screenings. We are especially grateful to you and your staff for including language that would also waive the deductible for colorectal cancer screenings regardless of whether or not a polyp or lesion is found. We believe these provisions will help eliminate financial barriers to screenings for beneficiaries and prevent cancer. Colorectal cancer remains the second leading cancer killer but detected early, it is 95 percent treatable. Screenings save lives.

The AGA looks forward to working with you to strengthening the Medicare program and remains committed to ensuring present and future beneficiaries have access to quality health care. We applaud your commitment to ensuring access for children and seniors in the CHAMP Act and look forward to helping you achieve passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Mark Donowitz, MD, AGAF

**CHAIR**

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