

THE SOCIETY OF THORACIC SURGEONS



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July 26, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
The Honorable Pete Stark
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
House Committee on Ways & Means
1102 Longworth House Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Dingell, Rangel, Pallone, and Stark:

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons, I write to congratulate and commend you on the introduction of the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act of 2007. This legislation will change our nation's health care policies for the better while making real and measurable improvements in the lives of millions of children, seniors, and other citizens.

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons recognizes the extremely difficult circumstances and the challenges that exist in making these important changes in a fiscally responsible manner. Given the many positive policy advances proposed within the limitations of Congressional pay-as-you-go rules, and the important positive impacts of the major offsets in the bill, we are pleased to endorse this legislation.

Cardiothoracic surgery applauds the provision in the legislation to create separate growth targets so that responsible utilization is no longer penalized due to the increased utilization of others. It is important that this provision be implemented carefully and further refined to encourage effective self regulation based upon patient need and effective quality improvement.

While we greatly appreciate the prevention of physician payment reductions in 2008 and 2009, it is clear that additional legislation will be needed to prevent untenable reductions in 2010 and beyond. A stable and positive physician payment system is a prerequisite to improving the quality and effectiveness of healthcare for our nation.

We look forward to working with both committees and the leadership of the House of Representatives to assure the enactment of this landmark legislation.

Sincerely yours,

John E. Mayer, Jr., MD
President