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September 3, 1999

The Honorable John Dingell
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

The American Academy of Neurology is a professional society representing 16,000 physicians specializing in neurology who provide services to many persons with disabilities and chronic conditions such as multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, brain injury, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy and Parkinson's disease. We, the patient's we serve and the disability community strongly support H.R. 2723, the "Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999," legislation introduced by you and Representative Charlie Norwood.

H.R. 2723 represents a truly bipartisan approach to patient protections and we believe this legislation will provide the necessary strong federal standards to establish patient protection rights. In particular, we support the following key elements of the bill:

- providing patients access to specialists for standing referrals and allow them to choose their principal care physician from generalists or specialists;
- establishing an independent external binding review that includes medical necessity standards defined as service or benefit consistent with generally accepted principles of professional medical practice;
- applying patient protection standards to all health plans;
- establishing a process for determining the medical necessity of experimental and investigative services;
- including a point of service option in plans that are closed panel HMO's: a patient's right to sue in state court;
- review of denials of non-formulary drugs and doctor involvement in formulary development; and
- coverage of routine costs of clinical trials and experimental services.

It is our hope that H.R. 2723 will be brought to the House floor for a vote and we urge all members of the House to vote for this bill.

Sincerely,

Francis I. Kittredge, Jr., MD
President



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