



ALLIANCE
FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

August 24, 1999

The Honorable John D. Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Dingell,

We at the Alliance for Children and Families are writing to express our support for the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act (H.R. 2723), which you have introduced with Representative Norwood. The Alliance, an international nonprofit association representing over 350 child- and family-serving organizations, supports this important legislation to protect patients' rights. Alliance members serve more than 5 million individuals each year in more than 2,000 communities.

Broad bipartisan support for this new legislation represents a major breakthrough on behalf of patients' rights. This bill provides essential protections for all consumers in the private health insurance marketplace. H.R. 2723 ensures that medical decisions will be in the hands of medical experts. It permits people to hold their managed care plans accountable when plan decisions to withhold or limit care result in injury or death. We believe that holding health plans accountable will be a strong incentive for them to deliver clinically necessary care, minimizing the need for lawsuits.

We support your bill because it includes much needed patient protections, strong reforms of the managed care industry and due process protections for providers. It ensures that patients have access to a fair and independent external review for cases in which care is denied. H.R. 2723 also ensures that patients have access to specialists, including, when appropriate, specialists outside a plan's network.

Thank you for your leadership in protecting patients' rights through the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999.

Yours sincerely,

Carmen Delgado Votaw
Senior Vice President, Public Policy