



American Optometric Association

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September 7, 1999

The Honorable Charlie Norwood
U.S. House of Representative
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Norwood:

The American Optometric Association (AOA), representing more than 34,000 doctors of optometry, is pleased to announce its support for H.R. 2723, *the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999*. This legislation provides the best range of patient protections among the managed care reform measures under consideration by the House of Representatives.

The Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999 embodies the key elements necessary for meaningful managed care reform. The AOA supports this legislation because it: (1) protects a patient's right to choose a provider, (2) ensures equity and competition in the health care marketplace and, (3) underscores the importance of quality in health care.

Patients must be empowered to make choices on issues affecting the health care they receive. This will promote quality, competition and efficiency within the health care arena.

You should be commended for your leadership in promoting patient protection legislation during the 106th Congress. As the changing environment of health care economics funnels more and more Americans into managed care plans, Congress must ensure that our traditional commitment to high quality care is not forgotten.

Sincerely,

Harvey P. Hanlen, O.D.
President