



August 19, 1999

Honorable Charlie Norwood
U.S. House of Representatives
1707 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Norwood:

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of the Service Employees International Union, I am writing in support of the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999, H.R. 2723.

We are very pleased that a truly comprehensive bipartisan patient protection bill has been introduced. This is a bill that addresses the concerns that many working families have about the failure of managed care plans to ensure access to quality health care and puts medical decisions in the hands of medical experts not insurance company bureaucrats. Unlike the Senate bill, H.R. 2723 would:

- Cover all Americans who have private insurance
- Provide true access to emergency services, specialists, continuity of care, and clinical trials
- Provide for an internal and an independent external appeals process that ensures a timely process for consumers for whom health care is denied or withheld
- Hold health plans accountable for treatment decisions that result in injury or death.

Additionally, H.R. 2723 includes a vitally important patient advocacy/whistleblower provision. As a union representing over 600,000 frontline health care workers, we know how important it is to protect health care workers who speak out against patient care deficiencies. Employers must be prohibited from firing or retaliating against such workers if we are going to encourage health professionals to report patient care problems.

We commend you for your leadership in putting forward a bill that provides real patient protections. SEIU looks forward to working with you to pass H.R. 2723.

Sincerely,

Andrew L. Stern
International President

ANDREW L. STERN
International President

BETTY BEDNARCZYK
International Secretary-Treasurer

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