



American Public Health Association

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February 16, 2001

The Honorable Greg Ganske
1108 LHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ganske:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), which represents more than 50,000 public health professionals dedicated to advancing the nation's health, I write in support of H.R. 526, the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001. We commend your leadership which has brought about this strong, bipartisan bill, and support the bill's strong patient protections.

Specifically, APHA supports the following elements of your legislation:

- Strong patient protections including access to emergency care, access to specialty care, access to clinical trials, direct access to pediatricians and ob-gyns, access to non-formulary drugs, continuity of care for those with ongoing healthcare needs, and access to important health plan information;
- Prohibits so-called "gag clauses" and allows doctors to freely discuss and provide information about patients' medical treatment options;
- Protects all Americans with private health care coverage;
- Includes enforceable patient protections, including liability provisions to ensure patients are not denied the benefits and care for which they are entitled.

APHA has consistently adopted policy urging attention to the important role high-quality health insurance plays in keeping the public healthy and free from disease. As managed care penetrates a substantial majority of the health insurance market, the quality of the service it provides becomes a major factor in public health. For this reason, our members believe very strongly that only a comprehensive piece of managed care reform legislation with a strong liability provision is satisfactory.

Again, we commend your leadership and look forward to working with you in moving forward with this important legislation this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammad N. Akhter'.

Mohammad N. Akhter, MD, MPH
Executive Director

