



# American Society of Transplant Surgeons

July 19, 2001

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
United States House of Representatives  
2328 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

I am writing to express the support of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons ("ASTS") for a strong, enforceable patients' bill of rights that can be signed into law this year. We commend you for your years of hard work on this issue and look forward to working with you in the future to ensure passage of the most comprehensive bill possible.

ASTS supports a patients' bill of rights that protects all Americans who have private health insurance. We feel that any patients' bill of rights Congress considers must provide beneficiaries with the right to timely access to specialty care, a guaranteed point-of-service option, and strong internal and external appeals processes. A comprehensive patients' bill of rights will ensure that all Americans have timely access to the quality care they need, and a fair process to appeal denials of coverage.

ASTS also feels that health plans should be held accountable for the medical decisions they make, especially when those decisions harm patients or lead to the patient's death. However, the remedies within a patients' bill of rights should not lead to sharp spikes in the cost of health insurance, thereby increasing the number of uninsured Americans. Therefore, ASTS is supportive of any thoughtful, balanced approach to health plan liability that holds plans accountable for medical decisions without excessively driving up plan costs.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We encourage you to work with your colleagues in the House of Representatives to produce a bill that President Bush will sign into law. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our offices through Gail Durant, Executive Director of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons, at (703) 684-5990.

Sincerely,

*Marc Lorber*  
Marc I. Lorber, M.D.  
President, American Society of  
Transplant Surgeons

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#### TRANSPLANT 2002

April 27-May 1, 2002  
Washington, D.C.