



March 14, 2001

The Honorable John D. Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2216

Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), I applaud your introduction of H.R. 526, the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001. A recent PVA survey revealed that over half of our members receive some or all of their health care outside of the Veterans Administration (VA) health care system, many from managed care organizations (MCOs). Clearly, this measure will have an important positive impact on many PVA members, not to mention their families.

Like the patients' rights measure that passed the House of Representatives in the last Congress, your bill offers significant protections for managed care enrollees including access to specialists, medical necessity judgments made by medical experts, and internal and external appeals processes. Furthermore, your legislation ensures these protections for the greatest number of Americans enrolled in MCOs. The same cannot be said of other recent proposals that would leave at risk those MCO patients in states with low managed care saturation or whose states enable MCOs to escape responsibility through federal waivers. In addition, you have graciously responded to critics of the last session's patient protection measure by preserving stronger state patients' rights laws and access to state courts while allowing a right of action in federal court for certain health plan decisions.

Thank you for your continued commitment to passage of a strong and thorough patients' bill of rights. PVA members appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with you to assure swift passage of this legislation during this Congress.

Sincerely,

Joseph L. Fox, Sr.
National President

cc: President George W. Bush