

July 25, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Upton and Pitts and Ranking Members Waxman and Pallone:

The American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), representing more than 167,000 nurse practitioners, commends your efforts to draft bipartisan legislation to reform Medicare's fee-for-service payment structure and permanently repeal the flawed "sustainable growth rate" (SGR). We believe the proposal approved by the Subcommittee on Health July 23 represents an important first step toward creating a stable and equitable payment system focused on improving the quality of care delivered to Medicare beneficiaries.

As providers of primary, acute, and specialty care for nearly 5.8 million Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries in 2011, nurse practitioners (NPs) are increasingly the provider of choice for millions of Medicare patients. Approximately 88 percent of NPs are educated and clinically prepared as primary care providers and nearly 70 percent currently practice in primary care settings. They undergo rigorous national certification, periodic peer review and clinical outcome evaluations, and adhere to a strong code of ethical practice. They are licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, providing care in settings ranging from clinics, hospitals, emergency rooms, and urgent care sites to private practices, nursing homes, schools, and public health departments.

We thank the Subcommittee for responding to many of our comments on previous discussion drafts of the bill, and we look forward to working with you to strengthen the legislation by ensuring that nurse practitioners are fully eligible to participate in the revised fee-for-service system and in alternative practice models. In particular, it is crucial to ensure that NPs are eligible for payment for their services in managing patients with chronic conditions. As leaders of patient-centered medical homes accredited by the National Committee for Quality Assurance

(NCQA), The Joint Commission, and URAC, nurse practitioners already provide essential coordination of care for patients with multiple chronic conditions.

It is also important that applicable nurse practitioner organizations be recognized as “eligible professional organizations” authorized to identify relevant clinical practice improvement activities for payment incentives. It is important that NPs are full participants in the development, implementation, and evaluation of quality measures for this undertaking.

Again, we applaud your work in advancing this important legislation and we are eager to work with you to refine and improve it and to oppose any efforts that would increase costs and reduce patient access to nurse practitioners. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact MaryAnne Sapio, Vice President of Federal Government Affairs, at (703) 740-2529, ext. 222, or at msapio@aanp.org.

Sincerely,



David Hebert
Chief Executive Officer, AANP