



March 6, 2012

The Honorable Dave Camp
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Camp and Ranking Member Levin:

The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), representing more than 10,000 radiation oncology medical professionals who treat more than 1 million cancer patients each year, applauds your leadership and commitment to repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) that was created by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2009. We recognize the need to rein in health care spending. However, we do not believe the IPAB is the way to accomplish this very important goal.

Radiation oncologists oppose efforts that may limit patients' access to life-saving cancer treatments. The IPAB has been given the authority to make significant payment cuts to Medicare providers with little oversight from Congress, which could negatively affect access, coverage, and quality of radiation therapy treatments. ASTRO remains committed to ensuring that cancer patients receive the safest, most effective radiation treatments, which is why we support H.R. 452 the Medicare Decisions Accountability Act of 2011.

While we oppose IPAB, we share your goal of reducing unnecessary spending in the Medicare program. As you explore ways to sustain the Medicare program for current and future beneficiaries, we urge you to consider the savings that could be generated from removing radiation therapy from the in-office ancillary services exception under the physician self-referral law. Radiation therapy is improperly categorized as an ancillary service under this exception and we are confident that closing this self-referral loophole will create savings for the Medicare program by reducing inappropriate utilization of radiation therapy services. The Congressional Budget Office is currently examining the savings attributable to closing this loophole.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue and we look forward to working with you to rein in health care spending while protecting access to life-saving cancer care for all Americans. Please feel free to contact Dave Adler, ASTRO's director of government relations at (703) 839-7362 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Laura I. Thevenot
Chief Executive Officer

Copy: The Honorable Wally Herger, Chairman, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee
The Honorable Pete Stark, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee