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The Honorable William M. Thomas, Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thomas:

On behalf of the 64,000 members of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), I am pleased to express support for elements of the Medicare package the House Ways & Means Committee has drafted that directly impact patient access to services provided by physical therapists.

In particular, APTA wishes to express its appreciation for the Committee's extension of the present moratorium on the \$1,500 cap on outpatient physical therapy services under Medicare, which is set to expire at the end of this year. The extension of the moratorium is necessary to ensure beneficiaries have access to the valuable restorative services that physical therapists provide. APTA is anxious to work with the Committee and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ultimately repeal this arbitrary limitation on services.

APTA also wishes to express its appreciation for the Committee's efforts to address the deficiencies of the Resource Based Relative Value Fee Schedule (RBRVS) that affect a wide range of services provided to Medicare beneficiaries by health care professionals. This issue greatly affects physical therapists in all outpatient physical therapy practice settings, including private practice, rehabilitation agencies, hospitals, and skilled nursing facilities that provide outpatient services.

Finally, APTA wishes to express its support and appreciation to the Committee for the inclusion of a study relating to the impact of access to physical therapists' services without the requirement of a physician referral. Today, some 35 states allow some form of direct access to physical therapists' services and we feel that Medicare beneficiaries should ultimately have the same access to physical therapists as citizens in these 35 states.

APTA appreciates the time and energy you and your staff have put into producing this Medicare package.

Sincerely,



Nancy Garland, JD
Director, Government Affairs