AMA
AMERICAN
MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

July 26, 2007

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the physicians and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to convey our strong support for H.R. 3162, the "Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007" (CHAMP Act). This legislation addresses two of the AMA's highest priorities: providing health insurance coverage for low-income children through the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and protecting seniors' access to care by preventing drastic cuts in Medicare funding for physician services.

SCHIP has been successful in significantly reducing the number of children without coverage; unfortunately there are still millions of children who are eligible for SCHIP but are not enrolled. The AMA strongly supports increased funding to intensify outreach and education efforts to ensure that all eligible children are enrolled in SCHIP. We also strongly support the provisions that would reduce enrollment and re-enrollment barriers for applicants.

The CHAMP Act replaces scheduled Medicare physician payment cuts of 15 percent over the next two years with two years of positive updates of 0.5 percent. Passing the CHAMP Act now will avoid the annual end-of-the-year scramble to stop the cuts, and will provide Congress with time to consider additional reforms to create a pathway to eliminate the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and replace it with a mechanism that accurately reflects the cost of practicing medicine.

The AMA strongly supports increases in tobacco taxes and elimination of overpayments to Medicare Advantage plans to offset the cost of covering low-income children and preserving seniors' access to care by averting the Medicare physician payment cuts.

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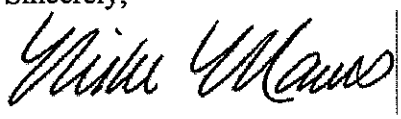
The CHAMP Act will be one of the most important votes in the 110th Congress for physicians and their patients. We look forward to continuing our work with you and all members of the House as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,



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