



Creating solutions, changing lives.

*Helping people with disabilities
gain greater independence*

Easter Seals

Office of Public Affairs
700 Thirteenth Street, N.W.
Suite 200
Washington, D C 20005
202.347.3066 phone
202.347.7385 tty
202.737.7914 fax
www.easter-seals.org

June 16, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Easter Seals strongly supports the Committee's provision in the "Medicare Modernization" bill that would implement a one-year moratorium on the \$1,590 cap on Medicare outpatient therapy services, effective January 1, 2004. This important action supports continued access to essential outpatient therapy services for Medicare's most vulnerable beneficiaries.

Easter Seals is alarmed that this arbitrary limit on Medicare outpatient therapy services is scheduled to take effect next month. The cap puts more than five million Medicare beneficiaries at risk of losing access to medically necessary therapy services that promote improved function, health, and independence. The moratorium is a significant and positive step towards resolving, long-term, the threat posed by the cap to appropriate care and sound health policy and practice.

Easter Seals is dedicated to promoting the independence of children and adults with disabilities. Each year, Easter Seals serve more than one million people through a nationwide network of affiliates that operate 450 centers. Thousands of people served by Easter Seals are Medicare beneficiaries.

Easter Seals is deeply concerned that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) intends to implement the therapy cap three or more months before notifying beneficiaries. This information gap seriously compromises informed decision-making on the part of beneficiaries and will lead to hardship. Beneficiaries deserve better. They need to understand that their benefits have changed in order to make appropriate decisions about their treatment. Easter Seals hopes that CMS will follow the leadership of the Committee and delay implementation of the therapy cap for the remainder of 2003.

Easter Seals greatly appreciates your leadership on the Medicare therapy cap issue. Easter Seals will urge your colleagues in the House and Senate to support this provision in Medicare reform legislation as it is considered for final passage.

Sincerely,

Randall L. Rutta
Senior Vice President, Government Relations