

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION



November 20, 2003

Mr. William 'Bill' Thomas
Chairman
House Ways & Means Committee
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thomas:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 7,000 members of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R) to congratulate you and your colleagues for achieving bipartisan agreement on legislation that would provide Medicare prescription drug coverage to seniors and make many other needed changes to the Medicare program. The AAPM&R is pleased to express our support for the agreement.

While we have yet to review final legislative language, based on the summary of the agreement that has been released and the announced agreements in July and September, it appears to meet all of the AAPM&R's major policy objectives. Therefore, the AAPM&R believes Congress should pass the conference agreement. We look forward to the opportunity to review final legislative language and provide Congress with additional comments as necessary.

This represents a huge step forward in providing affordable drug coverage for patients, a two-year fix on the physician payment update, and a one-year moratorium on the cap on outpatient therapy services that will help maintain access to physician services. In addition, the legislation eases unnecessary Medicare regulations and facilitates the voluntary use of electronic prescribing.

AAPM&R thanks you for your efforts to improve this vital program for our nation's seniors and stands ready to help assure final passage of this historic legislation.

Sincerely,

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