



**California Medical Association**  
*Physicians dedicated to the health of Californians*

November 18, 2003

The Honorable William M. Thomas  
United States House of Representatives  
2208 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Thomas:

On behalf of the California Medical Association, I am writing to urge your support of the Medicare conference report currently pending action on the House floor.

This conference report is the result of months of negotiation between House and Senate conferees and reflects a reasonable approach to the many problems facing the Medicare program, including the lack of a prescription drug benefit for our nation's seniors.

Moreover, this conference report sets aside the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' proposed 4.5 percent reduction in Medicare reimbursement to physicians and replaces it with a 1.5 percent increase in 2004 and 2005. As you know, Medicare reimbursement to physicians has failed to keep up with the cost of providing care and while the 1.5 percent increase for two years is still woefully inadequate, it is a step in the right direction toward protecting access to health care for America's Medicare beneficiaries.

The California Medical Association is proud to join with AARP and so many other groups and individuals in support of the Medicare conference report and urges your aye vote on this matter when it is considered on the House floor in the next few days.

Thank you for all of your hard work on behalf of physicians and patients and please support the Medicare conference report.

Sincerely,

Ronald P. Bangasser, M.D.  
President