



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION AGENCIES

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November 19, 2003

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The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House
Office of the Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Rm. H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable William Frist
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Rm. S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Hastert and Majority Leader Frist:

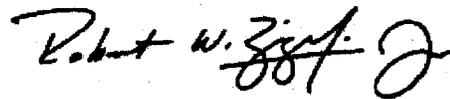
We are writing to express our strong support for the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003. The National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies ("NARA") represents the interests of Medicare-certified rehabilitation agencies and multi-disciplinary rehabilitation providers. The following provisions in the legislation are of crucial importance to our members and, more importantly, our patients:

1. Moratorium on Outpatient Therapy Caps. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 imposed arbitrary \$1,500 caps on outpatient therapy services for Medicare beneficiaries. The perverse result of the caps is that the Medicare beneficiaries in greatest need of rehabilitation services will be unable to obtain the care they require. While NARA supports a full repeal of the caps, we are appreciative of the decision to delay implementation for a year. NARA remains committed to working with Congress to find a solution that allows Medicare beneficiaries to have full access to all necessary therapy treatments.
2. Physician Fee Schedule Increase. The legislation provides physicians and other providers, including physical and occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists with a 1.5 percent fee schedule update for 2004 and 2005. In so doing, the legislation avoids a 4.5% reduction in the schedule that was due to take effect on January 1, 2004.

3. Regulatory Reforms. As the Medicare population has grown, so has the bureaucracy of the program. Paperwork burdens and billing complexities result in health care providers spending more time filling out forms and less time assisting patients. While the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has worked to lessen the regulatory burden on providers, the legislation makes important changes that will allow providers to concentrate on helping their patients.

Once again, thank you for addressing these important issues. We commend you for your work on this landmark legislation and urge its swift passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Zigenfus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Robert W. Zigenfus, P.T.
President

cc: Honorable Charles E. Grassley, Chair, Senate Committee on Finance
Honorable William M. Thomas, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
Honorable W.J. "Billy" Tauzin, Chair, House Committee on Energy and Commerce