



**A Coalition of 14 Medical Societies Representing
more than 200,000 Specialty Physicians in the United States**

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July 28, 2004

The Honorable John Dingell
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Dingell:

On behalf of the Alliance of Specialty Medicine, a coalition of fourteen medical societies representing more than 200,000 specialty care physicians in the United States, we are writing to thank you for your leadership in authoring H.R. 4628, the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 2004.

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine and its members have long advocated for improved access to quality specialty care for patients. The Alliance continues to believe that the patient protections contained in H.R. 4628 such as access to emergency care, access to specialty care, access to clinical trials, direct access to obstetricians and gynecologists, and guarantees to sound and timely internal and external appeals processes are critical components for all patients enrolled in managed care plans.

Although the health care market has changed since the managed care reform debate first began, the Alliance still believes that patients should be provided with a blanket of protections that guarantee access, choice and accountability. Unfortunately, today, patient access to specialty care is also being hampered by the rising costs of medical liability premiums that are exacerbated by declining Medicare reimbursements. We believe that these issues must be addressed in a comprehensive manner to ensure that patients have access to the care they need when they need it.

We look forward to working with you on H.R. 4628 and other important health care policy issues and as always, we commend you for your leadership in advocating for patients' access to affordable quality health care. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Bonta at pbonta@aad.org or (202) 842-3555 or Kathleen Teixeira at kteixeira@gastro.org, Co-Chairs of the Alliance's Patients' Bill of Rights Workgroup.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Association of Neurological Surgeons/Congress of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Cardiology
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Radiology Association
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Urological Association
National Association of Spine Specialists
Society of Thoracic Surgeons

American Academy of Dermatology Association • American Association of Neurological Surgeons/Congress of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons • American College of Cardiology • American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists • American College of Radiology Association
American Gastroenterological Association • American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology • American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery
American Urological Association • National Association of Spine Specialists • Society of Thoracic Surgeons