

January 27, 2009

The Honorable Charlie Rangel
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Camp
Ranking Member
House Committee on Ways and Means
1139-E Longworth Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and
Commerce
2125 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and
Commerce
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We, the undersigned organizations, appreciate the difficult and fast-paced work that has been done to prepare the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act for inclusion in the economic stimulus legislation that will be before the House of Representatives on January 28, 2009, and before the Senate soon after. We are concerned that many health care professionals will have limited or no access to nearly \$20 billion provided in this Act, whose purpose is to improve the efficiency of our nation's health care system and reduce errors.

Specifically, we are concerned that only physicians are eligible under a new Medicare incentive program that will provide substantial resources to those seeking to obtain and utilize electronic health record technologies. As you know, much of the services provided to beneficiaries under the Medicare program are provided by licensed and highly qualified health professionals other than physicians. We maintain that it would have been better from the outset to have broad eligibility in this new incentive program and limited the funding, rather than give the impression that some health care professionals were more critical to patient care than others.

We appreciate that the Committees have provided broader eligibility to resources under both the grants section and Medicaid sections of the legislation. However, these resources will not address the needs of those health professionals who are primarily serving a Medicare population in their practices. Thus, it is critical to revisit that section

in the future, and we are anxious to work with you on the next step in this process, since it is only through widespread usage of health information technologies that the full intent of this important initiative will be realized.

We look forward to working with the Congress and the Obama Administration after enactment of the economic stimulus legislation to ensure that equitable resources are available for all health care professionals seeking to utilize advanced health information technologies to improve efficiency and reduce the likelihood of errors.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Audiology
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Speech Language Hearing Association
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties