



March 19, 2010

The Honorable Bart Gordon  
The United States House of Representatives  
2306 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Gordon:

I wanted to contact you to express our disappointment that you have stated your intent to vote in favor of the Senate version of Health System Reform. The Tennessee Medical Association respectfully asks that you reconsider your position when it comes time to cast your final vote and vote NO.

We, the physicians of Tennessee, believe THIS legislation is not in the ultimate best interest of Tennesseans. It will increase health care costs for most Tennesseans; increase bureaucracy and administrative hassles for patients and practices; and be detrimental to health care access and personal choice in health care.

Americans with satisfactory health insurance will face *significant premium increases*, forcing many patients and employers into exchanges to try to find less expensive and less comprehensive insurance packages. The legislation is also void of strategies to increase the supply of physicians to care for those added into the system and the aging populations that will require even more care and services.

Counting on estimated savings *hopefully* achieved is a dangerous way to finance health care for the future. Just look at the budget estimates for Medicare back in the 1960s and TennCare in the 1990s to see how poorly government has done historically on estimates for health care costs. We have to be able to afford health care reforms in real, recurring dollars, not soft dollars from anticipated savings.

This legislation fails every Medicare patient and physicians due to its flagrant omission of a solution for the flawed "SGR" formula used to reimburse Medicare medical services, something we have visited with you and other members of Congress about for almost a decade.

The legislation *does not reduce bureaucracy within health care or simplify the health insurance industry* but multiplies the hassle factor, one of the most frustrating and wasteful aspects of today's health care system. Every administrative function added to the delivery of health care in this 2,000-page bill robs our system of resources intended for patient care.

The scope and authority of the 15-member Independent Payment Advisory Board (**IPAB**) *is also of grave concern to us*. Physicians must remain autonomous; the current provision could result in arbitrary exclusions of coverage services or decreases in reimbursement for services without adequate review or notice, thereby increasing financial risk to patients and physicians alike.

Page 2  
Rep. Bart Gordon  
March 19, 2010

Our country's last sweeping reform of health care was in 1964 and only impacted seniors. This affects every American and we need to take a more systematic approach, instead of attempting to fix everything all at once in a single piece of legislation that has only been debated for a few months. We simply cannot afford to make mistakes at this point and dismantle what works well in American health care today.

There is almost universal agreement that the status quo is unacceptable, but Americans are now facing a "take it or leave it" proposition. It does not have to be that way. *Congress can step back and retool reform and get it right.*

Please vote against this legislation. Send leaders back to work to develop a better bill that all Congress can accept and that the American people will truly benefit from, one that stands on its own merits and does not require political muscle and deal-making to pass.

Make part of your legacy to Tennesseans one of standing up for what the people want when it comes to their health care, not one of voting for legislation that financially ruined our country and gutted the American health care system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard DePersio". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard J. DePersio, MD  
President