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Combined Sections Meeting

February 17-20, 2010
San Diego, California

PT 2010

June 16-19, 2010
Boston, Massachusetts

September 11, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), we thank you for your efforts to reform the health care system to guarantee access to affordable health care for all individuals and to not place arbitrary caps on health care services.

In your address to Congress on September 9th, you stated; *“As soon as I sign this bill, it will be against the law for insurance companies to drop your coverage when you get sick or water it down when you need it most. **They will no longer be able to place some arbitrary cap on the amount of coverage you can receive in a given year or a lifetime.**”* APTA applauds this statement and has been working for over ten years to remove arbitrary caps to therapy services in Medicare.

Since 1999, Congress has been enacting legislation to forestall the negative implications of the therapy cap policy developed in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, which placed a financial limit on the outpatient physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology services a Medicare beneficiary could receive in a calendar year. Rather than repeal the policy in 1999, Congress chose to delay implementation of the policy, which ensured that beneficiaries could still access necessary services, but has made it harder to repeal this ill conceived policy. Congress has had to act on six occasions to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries are not harmed by the therapy cap policy under Medicare.

It is time for Congress to deal with this serious health policy problem and repeal the therapy cap. To do less at this time of overall reform would be to saddle the American public with still greater costs down the road in the form of additional legislation to ensure this arbitrary limit on therapy services does not harm patients.

As you promise to reform health care in our country and to assure that insurance companies do not place arbitrary caps on health care coverage, please consider removing the arbitrary caps that already exist in Medicare. Medicare should be held to the same standards as insurance companies in the care that is delivered.

APTA stands ready to work with you and Members of Congress to ensure health care reform addresses the needs of everyone in this country, including those in Medicare. Thank you for your leadership on health care reform and for your consideration of these issues. If you have any questions or need additional resources, please feel free to contact APTA's Director of Federal Government Affairs, Kelly Lavin at kellylavin@apta.org or 703-706-8548.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Scott Ward". The signature is stylized and cursive.

R. Scott Ward, PT, PhD
APTA President

RSW:kl

cc: The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Charles Rangel
The Honorable Henry Waxman