THE MEDICARE PATIENT EMPOWERMENT ACT OF 2013 (H.R. 1310)

POSITION

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) strongly supports the *Medicare Patient Empowerment Act of 2013*, legislation that would provide physical therapists with the ability to privately contract with Medicare beneficiaries. H.R. 1310 was introduced by Representative Tom Price (R-GA) on March 21, 2013.

BACKGROUND

It remains one of APTA's policy priorities to improve access to physical therapists by the elimination of unnecessary regulatory, legal, and payment policy barriers. APTA has long supported allowing physical therapists to "opt-out" of the Medicare program and privately contract with Medicare beneficiaries. APTA believes that Medicare beneficiaries should be empowered to select the health professional of their choice, and the association would support legislative change to allow for physical therapists and other health care professionals to privately contract with beneficiaries.

As Medicare reimbursement and regulations continue to challenge those serving in health care, it is imperative for providers to maintain the ability to choose what is most appropriate for their practices and patients.

PROVIDING GREATER PATIENT CHOICE

APTA believes Medicare beneficiaries should not be limited in their choice of high-quality health care providers. This legislation guarantees flexibility to the provider and patient, which will lead to better delivery of services. This legislation differs from the traditional Medicare "opt-out" for which some providers are eligible. It does not require a 2-year commitment to opt-out, and it allows Medicare beneficiaries to submit a claim to Medicare for potential reimbursement, similar to private insurance. The ability for beneficiaries to submit claims is a positive provision to safeguard patients from having to pay out of pocket for their choice of health care provider.

As Congress considers reforms to the Medicare system, APTA urges consideration of the expansion of opt-out to meet the needs of our evolving health care system.

For more information on APTA priorities, visit APTA's policy center at ***http://policy.apta.org***.

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Co-sponsor H.R. 1310 Today!
For additional information, contact the American Physical Therapy Association's Government Affairs Department at 703/706-8533 or advocacy@apta.org.