

Community Oncology Alliance

Dedicated to high quality, affordable, and accessible cancer care

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May 2, 2007

The Honorable Carolyn McCarthy
United States House of Representatives
106 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McCarthy:

On behalf of the Community Oncology Alliance (COA), let me take this opportunity to thank you for your due diligence as it relates to maintaining fair and equitable reimbursement for advanced diagnostic imaging services.

I am pleased to communicate that COA strongly endorses the legislation you have introduced this year, the *Access to Medicare Imaging Act of 2007* (H.R. 1293), co-sponsored with Congressman Joseph Pitts. As a practicing medical oncologist in the community setting, I can attest to the integral importance of advanced diagnostic imaging in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Of equal importance, are the continued access to and the appropriate reimbursement for the rendering of such services for both Medicare beneficiaries and the physicians who provide those imaging services. And, not unlike the current reimbursement cuts we are experiencing in Medicare Part B for oncology, those professionals whose expertise is in imaging are finding similar cuts, which threaten the viability and thereby access to those services.

COA supports the two year moratorium on payment reductions and remains optimistic that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on patient access, as well as a review on reimbursement and payment methodology, will correct such reductions and thereby make the appropriate adjustments needed to rectify the threat to access and therefore quality of services afforded to all Medicare beneficiaries.

I would also like to thank you for co-sponsoring the *Community Cancer Care Preservation Act of 2007* (H.R. 1190). This legislation, co-sponsored by your House colleagues, Congressmen Artur Davis and Jim Ramstad, addresses critical problems associated with Medicare drug and services reimbursement. Unfortunately, we are hearing of mounting access to care issues from around the country due to continued Medicare reimbursement cuts.

These past two months have shown us that no one is immune to cancer. The good news is that the combined impact of earlier diagnosis, thanks to the advances in medical and diagnostic imaging, more targeted therapy and widely accessible cancer care, have resulted in more Americans surviving cancer, which has become a chronic versus an acute disease.

Thank you again, Congresswoman McCarthy, for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Frederick M. Schnell, MD
President