

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chair  
Committee on Finance  
U.S. Senate  
SD-219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman: Baucus:

On behalf of millions of patients and providers who support S. 769, the Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act, we urge you to include a modified version of this legislation as part of health reform efforts this year.

Between 2006 and 2010, reimbursement for osteoporosis tests have been cut drastically, jeopardizing the ability of senior citizens to obtain these important diagnostic studies in their doctor's offices. When seniors with osteoporosis are undiagnosed, they do not receive treatment and are more likely to experience adverse health consequences, including debilitating or even fatal fractures. In 2005, osteoporosis-related fractures cost nearly \$17 billion - \$19 billion if costs of prevalent fractures are included. One in two women and up to one in four men over the age of 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. By 2025, annual direct costs from osteoporosis are estimated to rise to around \$23.3 billion.

The Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act would restore reimbursement for the two most common osteoporosis tests to their 2006 levels. We understand that fully restoring these cuts may not be practical, but we believe that action is needed to ensure continued patient access to these life saving tests.

It is our understanding that a compromise provision to restore reimbursement to 75 percent of the 2006 level for 2010 and 2011 is currently being reviewed for cost. This compromise would temporarily protect patient access while allowing time for a study to be conducted on the ramifications of reimbursement reductions on beneficiary access to bone mass measurement and how best to increase early diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis. As a group of national organizations representing patients and providers, we support this compromise and urge you to consider including it in the final House (Senate) health reform legislation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists  
American Bone Health

American College of Nurse Midwives  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Medical Women's Association  
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research  
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Assisted Living Federation  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
California Hispanic Osteoporosis Foundation  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations  
Foundation for Osteoporosis Research and Education  
Georgia Osteoporosis Initiative  
International Society for Clinical Densitometry  
International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine  
National Association of Commissions for Women  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Council of Women's Organizations  
National Osteoporosis Foundation  
National Resource Center  
North American Menopause Society  
Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation  
Possible Woman Foundation  
RetireSafe  
Society for Women's Health Research  
The Endocrine Society  
The Paget Foundation for Paget's Disease of Bone and Related Disorders  
U.S. Bone and Joint Decade  
Women In Government  
Women's Research and Education Institute