



Standing Tall for You®



April 6, 2009

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln
US Senate
355 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe
US Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

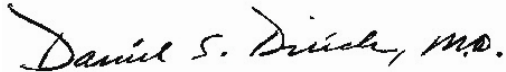
Dear Senators Lincoln and Snowe:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we applaud your leadership and commitment to strengthening the health of the nation's citizens through the reintroduction of S. 769, the "Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act of 2009." This vital piece of legislation will ensure that millions of Americans at risk for osteoporosis continue to have access to dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) and vertebral fracture assessment (VFA), the best tests available for diagnosing and treating this disease.

Osteoporosis is a major health care concern in the United States with annual costs of more than \$18 billion. Currently, approximately 300,000 Americans are hospitalized annually for hip fractures with a 20 percent fatality rate within the first year following fracture. But osteoporosis can be prevented, in part, by early bone density testing. DXA tests are considered the gold standard for osteoporosis testing, and have been included as a disease prevention service in the Welcome to Medicare exam visit. However, only 13 percent of eligible female beneficiaries receive this benefit each year. If the payment cuts implemented as a result of the Deficit Reduction Act and changes to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule are not reversed, this number will be even lower as patients lose access to DXA and VFA tests. And the likely result will be that more women will become disabled or die as a result of a preventable hip fracture.

Thank you, Senators Lincoln and Snowe, for recognizing the importance of prevention and early detection of bone fractures and osteoporosis. We fully support your efforts to maintain patient access to DXA and VFA services as provided in the "Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act." We look forward to working closely with you and your staff to advance and enact this important patient legislative initiative.

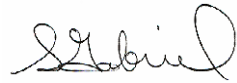
Sincerely,



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President
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists



Douglas Kirkpatrick, MD
President
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists



Sherine Gabriel, MD, DSc
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