



*Protecting Healthcare Quality, Access and Choice of Providers*

September 11, 2013

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman,

The Coalition for Patients' Rights – a national coalition comprised of more than 35 organizations representing a variety of licensed healthcare professionals – urges you and your colleagues in Congress to oppose H.R. 2817, the “Protect Patient Access to Quality Health Professionals Act of 2013,” offered by Representative Andy Harris, M.D.

H.R. 2817 is written to repeal the non-discrimination clause of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (specifically Section 2706(a), Title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act). The non-discrimination clause protects patient access to quality, affordable healthcare by ensuring that services provided by a full range of health providers – not just M.D./D.O.s – are covered by insurance plans. This provision safeguards patient access to other types of qualified and licensed providers, who are indispensable caregivers to millions of Americans, particularly those in rural and medically underserved areas.

As recognized in Section 2706(a), the myriad needs of patients are best met through the robust range of expertise brought by professionals including registered nurses, naturopathic physicians, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, marriage and family therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, advanced practice registered nurses (certified registered nurse anesthetists, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives and clinical nurse specialists), foot and ankle surgeons, chiropractors, acupuncturists, nutritionists and others.

Patients deserve to have coverage of the provider that best suits their individual needs. As millions of Americans are brought into the health insurance system through the ACA, we must protect not only a patient's right to choose a healthcare professional, but also secure that the healthcare workforce has the capacity to ensure patient access.

If you and your colleagues do not succeed in protecting the non-discrimination clause, you risk driving up costs for consumers, providing significantly less value to patients, and discouraging qualified, trained and licensed healthcare professionals from delivering much-needed care. We urge you to robustly support the non-discrimination clause of the ACA, so that the full range of non-M.D./D.O. healthcare professionals can simultaneously improve the quality of patient care, expand patient access to care and provide greater value within the healthcare marketplace.

Sincerely,  
The Coalition for Patients' Rights

The Coalition for Patients' Rights' members include the American Academy of Audiology, American Academy of Chiropractic Physicians, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy, American Association of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, American Academy of Nurse Anesthetists, American Chiropractic Association, American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons, American College of Nurse-Midwives, American Nurses Association, American Occupational Therapy Association, American Physical Therapy Association, American Psychiatric Nurses Association, American Psychological Association Practice Organization, American Speech-Language Hearing Association, Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, Association of Rehabilitation Nurses, Association of School of Allied Health Professions, Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses, Certification Board for Nutrition Specialists, Emergency Nurses Association, Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association, National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health, National Board for Certification of Hospice & Palliative Nurses, National League for Nursing, National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, and the Oncology Nursing Society.