

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2007

The Honorable John Spratt  
Chairman  
House Budget Committee  
309 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Ranking Member  
House Budget Committee  
B-71 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

We are writing to express our support for including provisions in the FY08 Budget Resolution to strengthen the Medicare program for seniors and protect access to hospital care for Medicaid beneficiaries.

Specifically, we urge the Committee to demonstrate its commitment to the Medicare and Medicaid programs and the seniors, disabled and children served by those programs, by opposing hospital cuts in the FY08 Budget Resolution. The nation's full service community hospitals, which serve as the health care safety net for so many vulnerable citizens, are under large and growing cost pressures. Rising numbers of uninsured, new and costly pharmaceuticals and technologies, labor shortages, and preparing for pandemics and terrorist threats are just some of the many pressures hospitals face and which our communities expect hospitals to address.

And yet, Federal payments are not keeping pace with the costs of responding to these challenges. Earlier this month, Congress' independent, nonpartisan Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) reported that Medicare payments are falling further and further below the minimal costs of care for our seniors. MedPAC estimates Medicare hospital operating margins of negative 3.1 percent in 2005 and projects that those margins will fall to negative 5.4 percent in 2007, the lowest Medicare margins recorded. This trend is simply unsustainable, and it is unacceptable. In response, MedPAC voted to recommend to Congress that hospitals receive a full inflation update in 2008. We hope you will agree with MedPAC and both include an inflation update for hospitals, and refrain from recommending any cuts in hospital spending in Medicare or in Medicaid, which has even lower operating margins.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



RICHARD E. NEAL



PHIL ENGLISH

*Lois Capps*

Lois Capps

*William D Delahunt*

William Delahunt

*Eliot Engel*

Eliot Engel

*Maurice Hinchey*

Maurice Hinchey

*James Langevin*

James Langevin

*David Loeb*

David Loeb

*Stephen Lynch*

Stephen Lynch

*Michael Michaud*

Michael Michaud

*Gwen Moore*

Gwen Moore

*James Oberstar*

James Oberstar

*Solomon Ortiz*

Solomon Ortiz

*Ellen Tauscher*

Ellen Tauscher

*Anthony Weiner*

Anthony Weiner

*Lincoln Davis*

Lincoln Davis

*Paul Hodes*

Paul Hodes

*Tim Holden*

Tim Holden

*Mark Souder*

Mark Souder

*Leonard Boswell*

Leonard Boswell

*James T. Walsh*

James T. Walsh

*John R. Kuhl, Jr.*

John R. Kuhl, Jr.

Sanford D. Bishop

Sanford D. Bishop

Robert A. Brady

Robert A. Brady

Doris O. Matsui

Doris O. Matsui

Jim Saxton

Jim Saxton

Vito Fossella

Vito Fossella

Tim Murphy

Tim Murphy

Mike Ross

Mike Ross

Michael R. McNulty

Michael R. McNulty

Jerry Weller

Jerry Weller

Jim Gerlach

Jim Gerlach

Carolyn Maloney

Carolyn Maloney

Silvestre Reyes

Silvestre Reyes

Rick Boucher

Rick Boucher

Frank LoBiondo

Frank LoBiondo

Brian Higgins

Brian Higgins

Allyson Schwartz

Allyson Schwartz

Martin Meahan

Martin Meahan

Albio Sires

Albio Sires

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin

Gene Green

Gene Green

Mazie K Hirono  
Mazie K Hirono

Jason Altmire  
Jason Altmire

Susan Davis  
Susan Davis

Sam Farr  
Sam Farr

Michael Capuano  
Michael Capuano

Todd Platts  
Todd Platts

Brad Sherman  
Brad Sherman

Charles Boustany  
Charles Boustany

Peter King  
Peter King

Bill Pascrell  
Bill Pascrell

Grace Napolitano  
Grace Napolitano

John Lewis  
John Lewis

Louise Slaughter  
Louise Slaughter

Tom Latham  
Tom Latham

Geoff Davis  
Geoff Davis

Jim Ramstad  
Jim Ramstad

David Davis  
David Davis

Jerry Costello  
Jerry Costello

Patrick J. Murphy  
Patrick Murphy

John McHugh  
John McHugh

Bill Shuster

Bill Shuster

Lynn Woolsey

Lynn Woolsey

Steve Israel

Steve Israel

Diana DeGette

Diana DeGette

Ron Lewis

Ron Lewis

Tim Walz

Tim Walz

Joe Courtney

Joe Courtney

Barney Frank

Barney Frank

John Hall

John Hall

Charles Dent

Charles Dent

Shelley Berkley

Shelley Berkley

Loretta Sanchez

Loretta Sanchez

Bobby Jindal

Bobby Jindal

John Tanner

John Tanner

Carol Shea-Porter

Carol Shea Porter

Marsha Blackburn

Marsha Blackburn

John Murtha

John Murtha

John Salazar

John Salazar

Mike Castle

Mike Castle

Fred Upton

Fred Upton

  
Jon Carter

  
Chaka Fattah

  
Christopher Shays

  
Chris Van Hollen

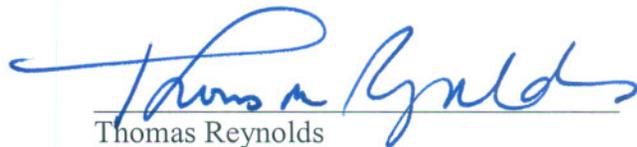
  
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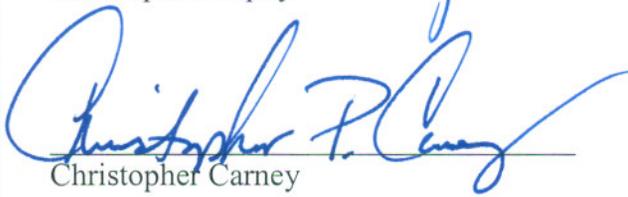
  
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Christopher Murphy

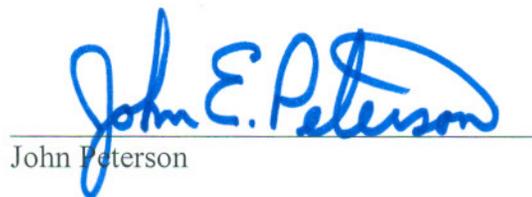
  
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Vic Snyder

  
Paul Kanjorski

  
David Scott

  
John Peterson

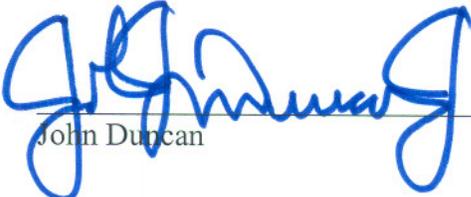
  
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Joe Sestak

  
Ron Paul

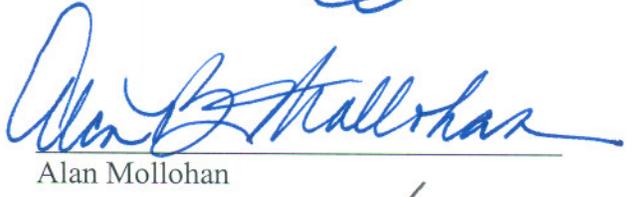
  
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Robert Wexler

  
William Jefferson

  
Peter Welch

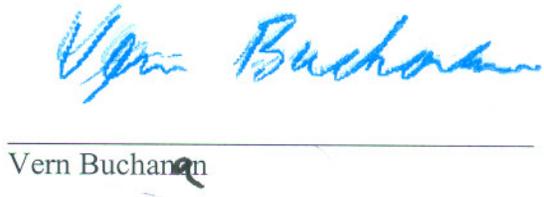
  
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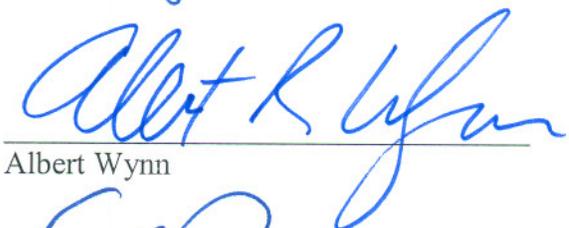
  
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Bob Etheridge

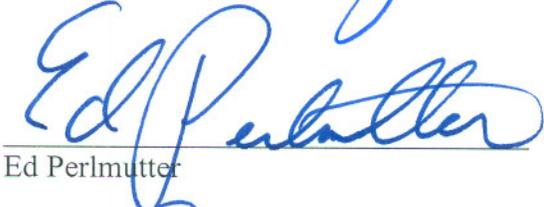
  
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Shelley Moore Capito

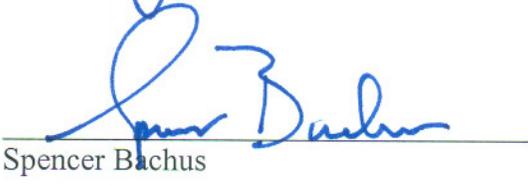
  
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Ed Perlmutter

  
Phil Hare

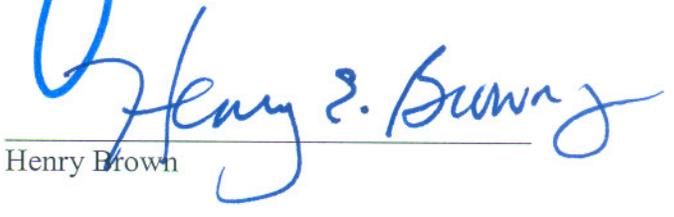
  
Spencer Bachus

  
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John Larson

  
Zoe Lofgren

  
Henry Brown

Mike McIntyre

Mike McIntyre

Bobby Rush

Bobby Rush

Darlene Hooley

Darlene Hooley

Nancy Boyda

Nancy Boyda

Elijah Cummings

Elijah Cummings

Virgil Goode

Virgil Goode

Henry Cuellar

Henry Cuellar

Dennis Kucinich

Dennis Kucinich

David Price

David Price

Neil Abercrombie

Neil Abercrombie

William Lacy Clay

William Lacy Clay

Doc Hastings

Doc Hastings

Anna Eshoo

Anna Eshoo

John Boozman

John Boozman

Donald Manzullo

Donald Manzullo

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Lucille Roybal-Allard

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Todd Tiahrt

Todd Tiahrt

Jose Serrano

Jose Serrano

Zach Wamp

Zach Wamp

Julia Carson

Julia Carson

Louie Gohmert

Louie Gohmert

Ralph Regula

Ralph Regula

Thomas Price

Tom Price

Ray LaHood

Ray LaHood

Stephanie Herseth

Stephanie Herseth

Bruce Braley

Bruce Braley

Devin Nunes

Devin Nunes

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Diane Watson

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee

Joe Donnelly

Joe Donnelly

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Betty McCollum

Hilda L. Solis

Hilda Solis

Nick Rahall II

Nick J. Rahall II

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Judy Biggert

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Jane Harman

Sandy Levin

Sandy Levin

Bart Gordon

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G.K. Butterfield

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Dave Reichert

Artur Davis

Artur Davis

Jim Matheson

Jim Matheson

Ron Klein

Ron Klein

Adam Schiff

Adam Schiff

Edolfus Towns

Edolfus Towns

Emanuel Cleaver

Emanuel Cleaver

Zachary Space

Zachary Space

Steven Kagen, M.D.

Steven Kagen

Dan Lipinski

Dan Lipinski

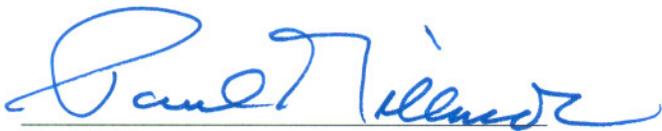
  
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Nydia Velazquez

  
Hank Johnson, Jr.

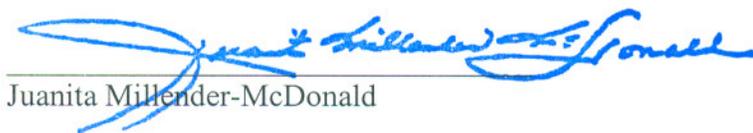
  
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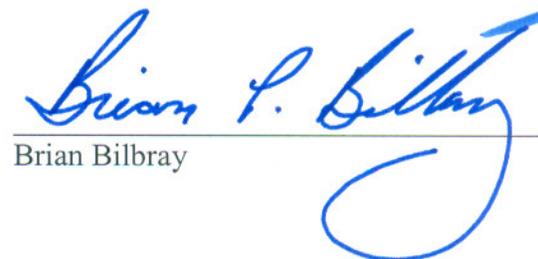
  
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Ike Skelton

  
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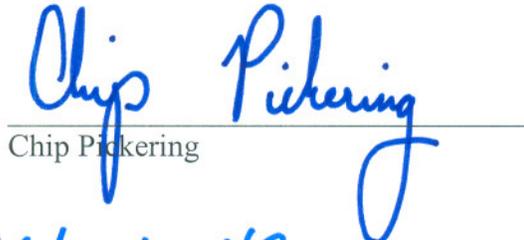
  
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Maxine Waters

  
Donald Payne

  
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Chip Pickering

  
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