AAMC

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November 2, 2009

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of America's medical schools, their physician faculty, and teaching hospitals and health systems, we commend the House leadership for moving forward on health care reform legislation that would insure up to 96% of Americans. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and its member institutions continue to believe that the goal of health care reform should be to ensure access to affordable, quality health care. Our institutions train the next generation of physicians and other health professionals and we are pleased to see new investments in the physician workforce.

Even without expanding coverage, the nation faces a shortage of up to 150,000 physicians in the next fifteen years, making further investment in Graduate Medical Education (GME) crucial to making sure everyone has access to health care. To this end, we commend you and your colleagues for continuing to seek a solution to the Medicare physician payment cuts and the SGR before January of 2010. The AAMC also appreciates the exclusion of an Independent Medicare Commission (IMC), given the potential for unintended consequences for patients that may occur if Medicare payment policy is changed without adequate Congressional review.

Our members provide a unique environment where discovery, the training of health professionals, and the highest quality patient care all occur together to help advance the health of our communities and the nation. As you move forward, the AAMC will continue to work with you on improving readmission policies and plans for Medicaid expansion to help avoid other unintended consequences that may reduce access for the most vulnerable in our communities.

Sincerely,

Atul Grover, MD, PhD, FACP, FCCP

Chief Advocacy Officer, AAMC