

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA **NOW!**

March 6, 2012

Dear Member of Congress:

We strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 452, the "Medicare Decisions Accountability Act of 2011." The bill would eliminate the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) that was created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to strengthen Medicare by reducing the rate of cost growth while protecting beneficiaries from service cuts or increased cost-sharing.

The IPAB is tasked with making recommendations for reforms to reduce Medicare expenditures when certain cost-growth targets are exceeded. In doing so, the ACA requires the IPAB to consider recommendations that improve health outcomes by promoting care coordination, prevention, quality, and efficiency while protecting and improving Medicare beneficiaries' access to necessary care. The ACA explicitly prohibits the IPAB from making recommendations that ration health care, raise taxes, increase beneficiary premiums or cost-sharing, restrict benefits, or change eligibility criteria. In addition, the IPAB may not recommend reductions in payments to hospitals before 2020.

After IPAB has produced its recommendations, they are to be submitted to Congress for consideration under an expedited set of procedures. Congress maintains the authority to reject the IPAB's recommendations and replace them with a different proposal that would achieve the same level of savings. Only if Congress fails to take action to supplant the IPAB's recommendations would they be submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services for implementation.

For all of the rhetoric about reducing the cost of entitlements, this legislation would do the exact opposite by erasing the commonsense process established in the ACA to slow Medicare cost-growth while protecting seniors from benefit cuts, cost-sharing increases, eligibility changes and rationing. Please stand with us in opposition to H.R. 452.

Sincerely,



Ethan Rome
Executive Director