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The Honorable Tom Price, MD
United States House of Representatives
100 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Price:

On behalf of the American Medical Association, I am writing to thank you for the recent introduction of H.R. 1650, the “Medicare Patient Empowerment Act of 2015,” and express our strong support for this legislation.

Growing bureaucratic burdens, inadequate payment rates that have not kept pace with the rising costs of providing care, and full patient schedules combine to make it increasingly difficult for doctors to continue seeing Medicare patients. While most doctors will continue to see long-time patients after they become eligible for Medicare, a growing number of them have already been forced to stop seeing new Medicare patients. As members of the baby boom generation enter Medicare and the nation’s doctor shortage gets worse, we can expect more and more seniors will find it difficult to see a new doctor.

Currently, seniors who want to see a physician who does not accept Medicare must pay entirely out of their own pocket. Your legislation would allow seniors to use their current Medicare coverage to see any physician, even one who does not participate in the Medicare program.

Seniors have paid into the Medicare program for years. The Medicare Patient Empowerment Act guarantees they will be able to see the physician of their choice, much like out-of-network options available to many with private health insurance plans. This greatly increases the likelihood that current beneficiaries and new Medicare enrollees will have access to care when and where they need it.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months to build additional support.

Thank you again for your efforts.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD