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February 8, 2013

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Unites States Senate  
709 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

On behalf of the American Medical Association, I am writing to thank you for the recent introduction of S. 236, the "Medicare Patient Empowerment Act," and express our strong support for this legislation.

Seniors and their physicians are becoming increasingly frustrated with the Medicare program given the uncertainty associated with repeated formula fixes, costly mandates, and paperwork. Because of this, increasing numbers of physicians are opting not to participate in Medicare or severely limiting their participation by not accepting new Medicare patients. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD