

# ACP

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS  
INTERNAL MEDICINE | *Doctors for Adults*

November 29, 2007

The Honorable Norm Coleman  
United States Senate  
320 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
United States Senate  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Coleman and Harkin:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am pleased to endorse your legislation, the “National Health Literacy Act.” ACP is the largest medical specialty society in the United States, representing 124,000 doctors of internal medicine and medical students. ACP recognizes the impact low health literacy has on health outcomes, quality of care, and ultimately, health care costs. We greatly appreciate your efforts to improve access to and understanding of health care information among all Americans.

ACP strongly believes that increasing public knowledge of accurate health information is critical to facilitating informed decision-making, enhancing patient-physician communication, and improving the quality of care. ACP supports efforts to identify and implement evidence-based strategies that increase access to and understanding of health and treatment options, cost of health care services and prescriptions, and performance of health care facilities and providers. ACP, therefore, is pleased that your legislation would establish a national health literacy center to research, collect and disseminate best practices for improving health literacy. ACP believes the state-based resource centers are critical for identifying and addressing regional and local health literacy needs. In addition, ACP applauds your efforts to identify opportunities to improve health literacy within the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Creating incentives to encourage patients to be prudent purchasers of health care is one of the eight evidence-based recommendations in ACP’s policy paper, *Achieving a High Performance Health Care System with Universal Access: What the USA Can Learn from Other Countries*, which will be released on December 4. ACP believes the “National Health Literacy Act” is an important step to provide the public with the tools needed to make informed decisions about health care, improve the quality of care, and stem rising health care costs. ACP applauds your leadership in introducing this legislation and we look forward to working with you to get the bill enacted into law.

Sincerely,



David C. Dale, MD, FACP  
President