

October 17, 2000

The Honorable Spencer Abraham  
United States Senate  
329 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Abraham:

**The undersigned organizations are writing to question the priorities of a Congress that has proposed large increases in Medicare payments to HMOs while failing to enact a meaningful patients' bill of rights for all Americans.**

Poll after poll has clearly indicated the American people's overwhelming desire for protections against abuses by some managed care plans. The House of Representatives passed such legislation a year ago. That legislation could now pass the Senate, but partisan differences and procedural maneuvers have paralyzed the deliberations and stymied the will of the majority.

**Despite its inability to require responsible behavior by HMOs, Congress is poised to provide billions in new federal spending for Medicare HMOs.** Government studies show that Medicare already overpays HMOs by nearly \$1,000 per enrollee per year. This cushion hasn't stopped HMOs from abandoning more than 1.5 million elderly and disabled Americans over the last three years, and there is little, if any, evidence to suggest that expanding the cushion will convince plans to stay in the program. Ironically, however, Medicare proposals slated for consideration before this Congress adjourns would channel more than a third of all the dollars allocated for program improvements to managed care.

**In effect, HMOs will be rewarded for putting profits before patients and the managed care industry will have even more money to add to the millions it has already spent to kill a patients' bill of rights.** The undersigned organizations believe that it makes no sense to provide HMOs with billions of new Medicare dollars without ensuring that these plans are delivering the services to which their enrollees are entitled. **We urge you to work with your colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass meaningful patients' bill of rights this year.**

Sincerely,

Connecticut State Medical Society  
Florida Medical Association  
Idaho Medical Association  
Indiana State Medical Association  
Kansas Medical Society  
Kentucky Medical Association  
Louisiana State Medical Society  
Maine Medical Association  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Medical Association of Georgia  
Medical Association of the State of Alabama  
Medical Society of Delaware

Medical Society of the District of Columbia  
Medical Society of New Jersey  
Medical Society of the State of New York  
Medical Society of Virginia  
Michigan State Medical Society  
Mississippi State Medical Association  
Missouri State Medical Association  
Montana Medical Association  
Ohio State Medical Association  
Oklahoma State Medical Association  
Oregon Medical Association  
Rhode Island Medical Society  
Tennessee Medical Association  
West Virginia State Medical Association

AIDS Action  
Alliance for Children and Families  
Alpha 1 Association  
\*American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
\*American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
\*American Academy of Neurology  
\*American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy  
\*American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists  
\*American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of University Women  
American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons  
\*American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
\*American College of Osteopathic Surgeons  
American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine  
American College of Radiology  
American College of Surgeons  
American Counseling Association  
\*American Dental Association  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Lung Association  
American Medical Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association

American Osteopathic Association  
American Podiatric Medical Association  
\*American Psychiatric Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
\*American Society of Echocardiography  
\*American Society of General Surgeons  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Thoracic Society  
\*American Urogynecologic Society  
\*American Urological Association  
The Arc of the United States  
\*Association of Freestanding Radiation Oncology Centers  
Bazon Center for Mental Health Law  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Center on Disability and Health  
Communications Workers of America  
\*Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
\*Epilepsy Foundation  
Families USA  
The International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services  
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill  
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc.  
\*National Coalition for Quality Diagnostic Imaging Services  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Council of Senior Citizens  
National Medical Association  
The National Organization for Rare Disorders, Inc.  
National Partnership for Women and Families  
National Women's Law Center  
RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association  
Service Employees International Union  
\*Society for Excellence in Eyecare  
Society of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology  
\*Society of Gynecologic Oncologists  
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
\*United Cerebral Palsy Association  
U.S. Public Interest Research Group