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March 23, 2010

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Dear :

I write you today both as a member of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and your professional colleague, to update you on the impact new health care reform legislation will have on your practice, your patients, and your profession.

Today, President Barack Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (HR 3590), the most comprehensive piece of health care legislation this country has seen since the enactment of Medicare 45 years ago. APTA did not take a position of support or opposition to HR 3590 but advocated for the inclusion of provisions critical to the physical therapy profession and the patients we serve. We are fully aware of and respect the diverse opinions held by our members regarding this landmark legislation.

APTA's primary objective as health care reform evolved was to position physical therapy as a cost-effective, high-quality, and accessible solution. It is clear we have been successful in our efforts. This is thanks to APTA's political action committee (PT-PAC) and our coming together, APTA and its members, to build a strong grassroots advocacy initiative and provide a daily lobbying presence on Capitol Hill.

Over the past 15 months, hundreds of you visited your members of Congress in Washington and at home, thousands of you sent e-mails, wrote letters, and made phone calls, and many of you provided your patients with information on these issues.

As a result of our advocacy efforts, HR 3590 contains several provisions that are consistent with APTA priorities. Highlights of a few of the APTA priorities included in HR 3590 are as follows:

- **Extends the Therapy Cap Exceptions Process for 2010**
Authorizes a 1-year extension of exceptions process to December 31, 2010.
- **Authorizes Study of Direct Access Under Medicare**
Creates the new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Innovation Center, which specifically authorizes a study on innovative models of delivery in physical therapy, including direct access to physical therapists under Medicare.
- **Advances the Physical Therapy Workforce**
Includes physical therapy in the allied health recruitment and retention programs to address health care workforce issues.
- **Provides Rural Payment Equity Under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule**
Extends the Geographic Practice Cost Index floor of 1.0 for 2010.
- **Establishes Rehabilitation as a Minimum Benefit**
Authorizes rehabilitation and habilitation as required minimum health care benefits as part of the health care insurance exchange.
- **Non-Discrimination**
Includes strong non-discrimination language on benefits and providers as an essential element of insurance reform. This will allow patients to choose their providers and the full range of needed services, which is critical as we increase coverage and access to health care.
- **Provides Guaranteed Issue, Renewal, and Choice**
Eliminates the denial or rescission of coverage based on pre-existing conditions.

APTA's work is not done, however. Now that health care reform has passed, much work remains to implement this law; educate our members, colleagues and patients; and seek policy changes to areas of concern. APTA will continue to work to ensure that physical therapy is advanced from a practice, research, education, and business perspective.

One of these concerns is that the new legislation does nothing to prevent the 21.2% cut in the Medicare physician fee schedule, effective April 1, 2010. APTA will continue its advocacy efforts to prevent these cuts from going into effect.

APTA will continue to provide you with information on the provisions of health care reform and how they will affect your practice. The best place to find the latest information is www.apta.org/healthcarereform. Additionally, we soon will host free evening informational webinars exclusively for members to learn more about this new law. We will e-mail you more information and dates as these webinars are scheduled.

On behalf of APTA, I'd like to thank you for your input in crafting the profession's message and making a difference on Capitol Hill.

Sincerely,



R. Scott Ward, PT, PhD

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