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The Honorable Robert Goodlatte
Chairman
Subcommittee on Intellectual Property,
Competition and the Internet
B-352 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to bring to your attention H.R. 1409, the "Quality Health Care Coalition Act of 2011," which has been referred to your Subcommittee. The bill would allow health care professionals to jointly negotiate with health plans regarding terms that affect patient care, thus ensuring physicians' ability to advocate for quality care for their patients and strengthening the patient-physician relationship.

Health care antitrust issues remain one of the top priorities for the AMA. We are aggressively working on a multi-faceted approach to improve the antitrust environment for physicians. The AMA is extremely concerned with increasing health plan consolidation, as well as the regulatory barriers that restrict physicians' ability to work together to create efficiencies and advocate on behalf of their patients. As a result of the current environment, physicians are forced to accept unfair and inequitable contracts that touch on every aspect of the patient-physician relationship. H.R. 1409 would provide individual health care professionals the ability to negotiate effectively with health plans.

On June 30, 2000, substantially similar legislation, the Quality Health Care Coalition Act of 1999 (H.R. 1304), sponsored by then Representative Tom Campbell (R-CA), passed the House of Representatives on a bipartisan vote of 276-136. At that time, the bill won your support, as well as that of current Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) and current Ranking Member John Conyers (D-MI). Since that time, the need for this legislation has grown even more dire given the continued consolidation in the health insurance market.

We appreciate the introduction of this legislation by Representative Conyers and his leadership in highlighting the importance of improving the antitrust environment for physicians. It is our sincere hope that the Subcommittee will consider this legislation in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD