

PARCA

Ensuring Patients' Access to Care

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman,

The Patients' Access to Responsible Care Alliance (PARCA) – a national coalition representing the interests of millions of patients and non-MD/DO health care professionals – has joined with other leading health care provider and patient advocacy organizations to urge you and your colleagues in Congress to oppose H.R. 2817, the “Protect Patient Access to Quality Health Professionals Act of 2013,” offered by Representative Andy Harris, M.D. This legislation would repeal an important patient-centered law which is aimed at ensuring that millions of Americans have greater access to quality health care services while at the same time helping to reduce overall health care costs by encouraging further competition in the health care marketplace among the nation's health care providers.

If enacted, H.R. 2817 would repeal Section 2706(a), Title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act. This provision, based on policy supported by bipartisan leaders for more than a decade and ultimately included as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, bars health plans from “discriminating with respect to participation under the plan or coverage against any health care provider who is acting within the scope of that provider's license or certification under applicable State law.” In short, this provision prohibits health plans from discriminating against entire classes of qualified licensed health care professionals solely on the basis of the provider's licensure or certification. Additionally, as this language was drafted with the best interest of the patient at its core, under this provision, health insurers can still address provider network quality and sufficiency for the availability of health care benefits to their enrollees.

Limiting patient access to and choice of qualified, licensed, and certified health care providers reduces competition and increases market share for select provider types, such as medical doctors, resulting in greater economic benefit for those advantaged providers at the expense of other provider types as well as consumers. Non-MD/DO professionals provide high-value, cost-effective care – and consumers should have the freedom to choose from which health care providers they receive care. Limiting patient access to and choice of qualified, licensed, and certified non-MD/DO health care providers, as H.R. 2817 intends, would only further reduce competition while concentrating market share and economic benefit into the hands of select providers – a misguided policy that would harm patient access to needed health care services while increasing costs for consumers and the delivery system as a whole.

For the reasons stated above our organizations urge that members of Congress withhold all support for H.R. 2817 and work to ensure that it is not enacted into law. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any

questions about the issues we have raised which are of the utmost concern to our organizations and the large number of health professionals that we represent.

Sincerely,

The PARCA Coalition:

- American Academy of Audiology
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- American College of Nurse Midwives
- American Optometric Association
- American Podiatric Medical Association
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
- American Chiropractic Association
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Psychological Assn. Practice Organization
- National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists

Joining PARCA in opposition to H.R. 2817:

- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
- American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
- American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- American Dental Association
- Hispanic Dental Association
- American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists
- American Academy of Periodontology

For more information, visit: accessparca.org

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