Statement of the
American College of Radiology
To the
House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee’s
Hearing “IPAB: the Controversial Consequences for Medicare and Seniors”

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

The American College of Radiology (ACR), representing 36,000 radiologists, radiation oncologists, medical physicists, interventional radiologists and nuclear medicine physicians, would like to express our strong opposition to the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB).

Created by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the 15 member IPAB is intended to control Medicare spending through the use of targeted spending reductions and a fast-track legislative process. Since the beginning of the health care reform debates in 2009, ACR has consistently expressed opposition to the creation of this entity.

We are deeply troubled by the Board’s composition of unelected officials which would eliminate the opportunity for patients and physicians to raise grievances with Congress regarding Medicare payment rates. We believe that IPAB sets a dangerous precedent for overriding the normal legislative process and we strongly protest a process in which elected officials would shed their ability to adequately represent patients and constituents. Furthermore, IPAB’s recommendations will unfairly target physician costs within the overall health care system, potentially prompting physicians to no longer accept Medicare patients, thus threatening patient access to care.

Although we applaud efforts by Congress to control the ever-increasing cost of health care in the United States, the ACR is gravely concerned that IPAB will become an unregulated autonomous seat of power with the ability to influence medical care, without answering to the very people whose lives it will affect. This process should have no place in a true democracy.

The American College of Radiology stands united with our colleagues in the House of Medicine in opposition to IPAB. We urge Congress to take decisive action to repeal this harmful entity and we applaud the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s attempts to review this policy.
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