



February 4, 2013

Representative Phil Roe
U.S. House of Representatives
407 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Roe:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) endorses H.R.351, the “Protecting Seniors’ Access to Medicare Act,” which would eliminate the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010. This Board, starting in 2014, is empowered to make cuts in Medicare reimbursement without congressional authorization. We are concerned that ACA gives too much authority to the IPAB.

Specifically, H.R.351 would eliminate sections 3403 and 10320 of ACA, which define the IPAB Board and its responsibilities, outline its membership, and establish a process for making ongoing payment modifications and cuts. ACA stipulates that the IPAB recommended cuts in Medicare reimbursement are triggered if certain health care spending limits are exceeded. Congress can forestall these reductions by enacting a separate, but equal package of spending cuts.

AACC is concerned that the IPAB will be making policy decisions, with far-reaching ramifications for our health care system, without congressional or public input. We believe that any deliberations involving payment system changes should be transparent and open to stakeholder participation. The IPAB does not provide for such a process. AACC urges that Congress repeal the IPAB and allow future payment modifications to be made through the existing legislative process.

By way of background, AACC is the principal association of professional laboratorians--including MDs, PhDs and medical technologists. AACC’s members develop and use chemical concepts, procedures, techniques and instrumentation in health-related investigations and practice in hospitals, independent laboratories and the diagnostics industry worldwide. The AACC provides international leadership in advancing the practice and profession of laboratory medicine and its applications to health care. If you have any questions, please call me at (410) 328-8672, or Vince Stine, PhD, Director, Government Affairs, at (202) 835-8721.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Christenson", written in a cursive style.

Robert Christenson, PhD
President, AACC