

June 16, 2009

The Honorable Ted Kennedy
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Enzi:

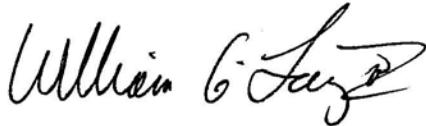
The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) is pleased with the overall intent of the Affordable Health Choices Act. Your commitment to increasing all Americans' access to high quality healthcare is certainly commendable. The legislation's focus on opportunities for preventing unnecessary illness and keeping our citizens well is an approach that has been too long in coming. Our intent is to work with you and the Committee to make sure this opportunity becomes a reality.

Faculty at our nation's colleges and schools of pharmacy are well-positioned to provide the necessary evidence-base necessary to improve the quality of care to which patients have access. Pharmacy faculty are also the educators of a healthcare professional- the pharmacist- that your legislation recognizes as essential in quality improvement. Your legislation, in section 213, makes clear that the quality of care, especially for the chronically ill, can best be improved by increasing patient access to the management of the medications they are prescribed. Integrating pharmacist-provided medication therapy management across the healthcare continuum, including primary care settings, as proposed in Section 212, indicates that you and your staff heard the testimony of so many individuals that team-based care focused on the needs of the patient is how quality is improved and costs reduced. The use of evidence-based approaches to care is much more tenable when policy-makers use solid evidence in policy development.

The provisions related to the health professions workforce indicate an understanding by the Committee that we must pay greater attention to the diversity and strength of the workforce pipeline at the secondary and post-secondary education level. AACCP supports the provisions aimed toward this end as well as those that endeavor to increase the number of healthcare professionals prepared to care for our nation's increasing older adult population. Recognizing the need to ensure there are sufficient numbers of appropriately prepared faculty to educate these geriatric practitioners is also well received. While the overall workforce provisions maintain the status quo of primary care as a provider-focused concept instead of a patient-focused concept we regard the provisions reinvigorating the area health education centers as essential and relevant to the goal of improved quality through team-based, patient-centered care.

Academic pharmacy is a rich resource that has provided much of the evidence-base used to support many of the provisions within the Affordable Health Choices Act. Pharmacy faculty remain committed to working with the Committee to ensure that new evidence is readily transmitted to policy-makers and healthcare professionals so that our nation's healthcare system continues to meet the needs of the patients it serves. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss how AACP and its members can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William G. Lang". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "W".

William G. Lang, MPH
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