



3300 Woodcreek Drive
 Downers Grove, Illinois 60515
 630-573-0600 / 630-963-8607 (fax)
 Email: info@asge.org
 Web site: www.asge.org

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The Honorable Kevin Brady
 Chairman
 Committee on Ways and Means
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Ways and Means
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal:

As the Committee on Ways and Means considers the "Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2017" (H.R. 849), the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) sends its strong support and encourages the bill's swift adoption.

The Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) was established in 2010 in an attempt to rein in growth in Medicare spending. While perhaps viewed necessary at the time, the IPAB was conceived prior to enactment of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act which was designed to contain costs while maintaining or enhancing quality of health care. By comparison, the IPAB is a blunt instrument that, if triggered, would arbitrarily cut Medicare payments to providers to achieve savings targets and, consequently, threaten patient access to care.

The Medicare Trustees project IPAB could be triggered for the first time as early as 2021, setting up a process that could result in steep Medicare cuts to providers that must be achieved within a single year. Already the Trustees project that beneficiary access to Medicare-participating physicians may become a significant issue in the long term under current cost-reducing measures, which includes actions of the IPAB, that lead to lower physician payment rates.

ASGE and its members are committed to the responsible use of health care resources and quality improvement but use of the IPAB to constrain Medicare spending will be disruptive to patient access. We therefore seek repeal of the IPAB by passage of H.R. 849.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Woods, MD, FASGE
 President
 American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy