January 24, 2007

TO: US COPD Coalition Participants
RE: Pulmonary Rehabilitation Legislation

Action Requested

Today, please contact members of Congress to:

- Cosponsor legislation creating a pulmonary rehabilitation benefit in the Medicare program (S.329/H.R. 552)

Deadline

To have maximum impact, please contact your Senators and/or Representatives by Wednesday, February 14, 2007.

Too Busy To Write Congress? Let ATS Do It For You!

Visit the ATS website and add your name to draft letter that you can edit and email to your Members of Congress from the advocacy section of the ATS Website. The ATS website address is: http://capwiz.com/thoracic/home/

Background

Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID), and Representative John Lewis (D-GA) and Representative Chip Pickering (R-MS) have introduced legislation (S. 329/H.R. 552) to create a category for pulmonary rehabilitation under the Medicare statute. Currently, many Medicare beneficiaries with respiratory conditions have access to pulmonary rehabilitation programs that are scientifically proven to improve the health and well being of patients with COPD and other diseases. These pulmonary rehabilitation programs have also been shown to reduce health care costs by reducing health care utilization in patients with COPD.

However, due to a quirk in Medicare law, not all Medicare beneficiaries have access to this proven medical therapy. The lack of a uniform policy on pulmonary rehabilitation programs means some Medicare beneficiaries are not receiving the optimal treatment for their disease. Such a situation is unacceptable.

The legislation introduced by Sens. Lincoln and Crapo and Reps. Lewis and Pickering creates a specific pulmonary rehabilitation in the Medicare statute, therefore ensuring access to this proven therapy for all Medicare beneficiaries.

Specifically, the legislation will:

- Create a pulmonary rehabilitation benefit in the Medicare statute
- Create a national policy for coverage of pulmonary rehabilitation services

Attached: Proposed letter to Senators
Proposed letter to Representatives
Dear Senator:

As a health care provider who treats patients with lung disease (or patient with lung disease) and a constituent, I strongly urge you to cosponsor the Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation legislation (S.329) introduced by Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mike Crapo. This legislation will ensure Medicare beneficiary access to vital therapeutic services for respiratory and cardiac disease.

As you may know, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States and is a significant source of Medicare expenditures – resulting in literally billions of Medicare expenditures annually. Today, many patients with COPD and conditions enjoy access to pulmonary rehabilitation programs that are scientifically proven to improve the health and well being of patients with COPD and other diseases. These pulmonary rehabilitation programs have also been shown to reduce health care costs by reducing health care utilization in patients with COPD.

However, due to a quirk in Medicare law, not all Medicare beneficiaries have access to this proven medical therapy. The lack of a uniform policy on pulmonary rehabilitation programs means some Medicare beneficiaries are not receiving the optimal treatment for their disease. Such a situation is unacceptable.

The legislation introduced by Senators Lincoln and Crapo creates a specific pulmonary rehabilitation and cardiac rehabilitation benefit in the Medicare statue, therefore ensuring access to this proven therapy for all Medicare beneficiaries.

Please show your support for patients with respiratory disease by cosponsoring this important legislation.

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Name    City, State
Dear Representative:

As a health care provider who treats patients with lung disease (or patient with lung disease) and a constituent, I strongly urge you to cosponsor the Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation legislation (H.R. 552) introduced by Representative Lewis and Representative Pickering. This legislation will ensure Medicare beneficiary access to vital therapeutic services for respiratory and cardiac disease.

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Name

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