



**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
OTOLARYNGOLOGY—
HEAD AND NECK SURGERY**

January 11, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the more than 11,000 members of the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS), **I urge you to oppose the inclusion of an Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) for Medicare as you develop the final healthcare reform legislative package.**

The AAO-HNS is the world's largest organization representing specialists who treat the ear, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The medical disorders treated by our physicians are among the most common that afflict all Americans, young and old. They include chronic ear infection, sinusitis, snoring and sleep apnea, hearing loss, allergies and hay fever, swallowing disorders, nosebleeds, hoarseness, dizziness, and head and neck cancer. We are commonly referred to as ENT physicians.

The role that Congress has traditionally played in crafting and overseeing the Medicare program to provide the best policies for beneficiaries is one that has had a significant impact in our communities. Through the legislative process, legislators are able to represent the needs of their communities by improving benefits for seniors and the disabled, implementing policies that fill the healthcare workforce pipeline, and ensuring that hospitals are equipped to care for diverse populations across the country. Such a responsibility is one that should not be taken, or given away, lightly.

The Independent Payment Advisory Board would essentially assume authority over the Medicare program and create an unelected body accountable only to the President. We firmly believe that replacing elected officials with political appointments will not remove the “politics” from the equation.

The AAO-HNS and many others in the medical community believe the IPAB, as structured in the Senate-passed healthcare reform bill, is an ill-advised concept that will damage access to and the delivery of quality care within the Medicare program. We urge you to oppose this dangerous provision and ensure it is excluded from the final legislative package.

Sincerely,

Ronald B. Kuppersmith, MD, MBA
President

David R. Nielsen, MD
Executive Vice President/CEO

Cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, The Honorable John Boehner

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