

Access to Medical Imaging Coalition

Protecting and Preserving Access to Quality Imaging Services for our Nation's Medicare Patients

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AMIC Statement on Senate Finance Committee Health Policy Proposals

Washington, D.C. – The Access to Medical Imaging Coalition (AMIC) today commended Chairman Max Baucus and Sen. Chuck Grassley and offered its support for proposed policies regarding medical imaging as well as the Senate Finance Committee's goal of providing universal coverage for all Americans. According to AMIC, the imaging provisions contained in the Finance Committee's *Transforming the Health Care Delivery System: Proposals to Improve Patient Care and Reduce Health Care Costs* are forward-thinking policies that will ensure proper utilization of diagnostic imaging services over the long term.

Specifically, AMIC endorses the Finance Committee's proposal to promote adherence to appropriateness criteria for imaging services. The designation of nationally recognized, physician-developed appropriateness criteria together with an education and confidential feedback program to report patterns of adherence to those criteria will provide the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) with necessary information to limit inappropriate imaging while maintaining patients' access to needed imaging services.

AMIC also strongly supports the establishment of a nationwide Diagnostic Imaging Exchange Network (DIEN) that would allow physicians to access a patient's past imaging studies in order to determine the necessity, safety and appropriateness of ordering a new scan. A DIEN would produce savings to the Medicare program by eliminating many duplicative scans while improving patient safety through the reduction of radiation exposure. AMIC also supports the transparency in self-referrals policy proposal that would require that physicians disclose their financial interest in pre-identified imaging services.

AMIC remains very concerned about the potential inclusion of a policy that would use radiology benefit managers (RBMs) to control Medicare beneficiaries' access to certain imaging services. RBMs are for-profit management companies established by the health insurance industry to deny coverage for imaging services. Physicians who deal with RBMs say they undermine patient care, force patients to wait to receive needed tests, and cause delays in diagnosis and care.

As the legislative process moves forward, AMIC looks forward to working with the Senate Finance Committee to build support for its imaging services policies and universal coverage goals.

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About AMIC – AMIC represents more than 100,000 physicians, medical providers, and patient organizations throughout the U.S. It also includes health technology firms that manufacture imaging equipment and supplies and that employ tens of thousands of workers. Thus, AMIC represents those who develop medical imaging technologies, those who apply it, and those who benefit from it. The coalition was organized in early 2006, soon after Congress passed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which significantly reduced the level of funding for medical imaging services provided in independent imaging facilities and physician offices. The coalition conducts public affairs, advocacy, and educational activities on behalf of legislation to address these payment reductions. It also promotes the adoption of policies that focus on medical imaging quality and appropriateness, so that patients are receiving the right imaging test by the right provider at the right time.