

The Council for Affordable Health Insurance



February 15, 2006

The Honorable Pete Sessions
U.S. House of Representatives
1514 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Sessions:

On behalf of the Council for Affordable Health Insurance (CAHI) we are writing to express our support for H.R. 4450, the Hospital and Ambulatory Surgery Center Price Disclosure and Litigation Act of 2005. CAHI was organized in 1992 as a research and advocacy organization devoted to positive, market-based health care reforms that preserve freedom of choice for individuals and encourage a competitive health insurance market.

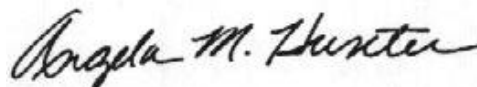
H.R. 4450 provides charge-related lawsuit protections to hospitals that voluntarily disclose and agree to prices with uninsured patients prior to performing a medical procedure. The bill is completely voluntary on hospitals, applies only in non-emergency situations and covers uninsured (and in some cases, self-pay) patients. Hospitals that choose to participate, would settle on a price with a patient, prior to the procedure. The patient would be provided with a cost estimate including a comparison cost for insured and Medicare patients. Hospitals who voluntarily agree to the bills provisions must report the prices of their most performed procedures to Health and Human Services for posting on their website.

This legislation begins to address price transparency for the most vulnerable health consumers: uninsured patients. Taking this step may provide a template for dissemination of this vital information to consumers who are quickly moving to consumer directed health care plans. Knowledge is power. We cannot empower patients or consumers without vital price information. We commend you for introducing this legislation and pledge our assistance to working for the bills passage.

Sincerely,



Merrill Matthews
Director



Angela M. Hunter
Director of Federal Affairs

