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January 21, 2009

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

Re: "*American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*"

Dear Madam Speaker:

On behalf of the patients we represent, National Patient Advocate Foundation (NPAF) would like to thank you for your leadership on behalf of millions of patients across the nation and to support the thoughtful approach to addressing healthcare issues in the "*American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.*"

NPAF is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving access to healthcare services through policy reform. Our mission of creating avenues of patient access through improved access to, and reimbursement for, evolving therapies, therapeutic agents, and devices is influenced by the experience of patients who receive case management services from our companion organization, Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF). Last year, PAF received more than 7.5 million inquiries from patients throughout the United States seeking information and assistance for access to care issues resulting from diagnoses of a chronic, debilitating or life-threatening disease. Of those, 45,870 became full patient cases involving communications made by PAF staff on behalf of a patient in order to reach positive resolution.

There are many issues of importance that we understand are under active consideration by the House and Senate. We would like to mention just a few that are of particular importance to patients across America, and that we ask be included when finalizing the economic stimulus package:

I. Medicaid Spending

Forty-three states are expected to face budget shortfalls in 2009 and 2010; in addition, nineteen states have already made substantial cuts to their State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and/or Medicaid programs and more states are expected to follow. Governors and state legislatures across the country have warned that without additional federal assistance, major cuts in eligibility, enrollment, and benefits may result. Such cuts in these safety net programs will have significant and negative impact on the health and wellness of patients. NPAF is very pleased that the economic stimulus includes \$87 billion in Medicaid spending to help struggling states, and most importantly, provide patients with access to health care when they need it the most.

II. Health Information Technology

Investment in health information technology will not only provide a direct and immediate impact on our economy, but over the long-term, it will help improve the efficiency of our health care system as well as the quality of care patients receive. Providing financial assistance to providers and hospitals to encourage the adoption of costly health information systems will reduce medical errors, minimize unnecessary and duplicative tests and most importantly, improve coordination of care for patients. NPAF offers its strong support for including \$20 billion in health information technology funding in the economic stimulus.

III. Biomedical Research

Funding for biomedical research is an essential part to creating jobs and improving the economy, but for patients it is also a critical component of a broad effort to fight cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Biomedical research funding will provide the necessary resources and support to researchers across the country to help them pursue the research opportunities with the greatest likelihood of positively changing how we prevent, diagnose, and treat life-threatening diseases like cancer. NPAF is pleased that the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009” includes \$1.5 billion for the National Institutes of Health to support lifesaving medical research and improve university research facilities across the country.

IV. Wellness & Prevention

NPAF is pleased that the economic recovery act includes \$2.35 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to advance wellness and prevention programs. This funding will help improve evidence-based clinical and community based prevention and wellness strategies and public health workforce development activities that address chronic and infectious disease rates and health disparities. In addition, increased funding would include evidence-based interventions focusing on obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, tobacco cessation and smoking prevention.

Again, NPAF thanks you for your efforts on behalf of patients. We urge you to consider these issues in the context of the economic stimulus package. If you have any questions or if we may provide you with additional information please feel free to contact me or Grayson Fowler at 202-347-8009.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Davenport-Ennis
President & CEO