



American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists

245 Riverside Avenue • Suite 200 • Jacksonville, FL 32202 • Ph: (904) 353-7878 • Fax: (904) 353-8185 • www.aace.com

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November 6, 2007

The Honorable Shelley Berkley
U.S. House of Representatives
Room 405 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Berkley:

On behalf of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, we want to thank you for sponsoring the "Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act of 2007." AACE strongly supports and endorses this legislation.

The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) is a medical professional community of clinical endocrinologists committed to enhancing its members' ability to provide the highest quality of care to patients with endocrine problems such as osteoporosis, diabetes, thyroid disorders, growth hormone deficiency, cholesterol disorders, hypertension and obesity.

AACE commends you for your leadership in addressing this critical Medicare policy that is having a chilling effect on patient access to high quality osteoporosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment conducted by a dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) procedure. We are already seeing the discontinuation of DXA procedures in clinics and mobile services around the country resulting from the 40% payment reduction that went into effect on January 1st of this year. If this ill-conceived and unwarranted payment policy is not reversed, DXA testing will disappear from the physician office over the next three years when the scheduled 75% payment cut is fully implemented. The nationwide gap in osteoporosis care that currently exists with only 10% of eligible beneficiaries getting tested in 2006 will only worsen. Patients will fail to be tested, diagnosed and appropriately treated, leading to debilitating fractures, loss of mobility, nursing home admission and even death, while Medicare costs grow and place additional burdens on the nation's health care system.

The "Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act of 2007" ensures patient access to osteoporosis testing which is an important preventive health benefit included in the Welcome to Medicare exam visit. Payment policies designed to control the volume and growth of advanced imaging procedures such as MRI, CT, and PET are counterproductive for a low-cost, underutilized preventive benefit. Passage of this legislation will provide a sustainable reimbursement rate for DXA and appropriately refocus the Medicare program on disease prevention and quality of care.

Once again, thank you for sponsoring the "Medicare Fracture Prevention and Osteoporosis Testing Act of 2007." We look forward to working with you to advance this important initiative through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Richard Hellman, MD, FACP, FACE
AACE President

Jonathan D. Leffert, MD, FACP, FACE
Chair, Legislative & Regulatory Committee

cc: AACE Board of Directors
AACE Legislative and Regulatory Committee

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