



Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

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August 1, 2013

The Honorable Andy Harris, MD
U.S. House of Representatives
1533 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 2817 Removal of non-discrimination requirements relating to health care providers. **Oppose**

Dear Dr. Harris:

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) is a national professional association for massage and bodywork therapists that provides professional liability insurance, business resources, publications, and legislative and regulatory advocacy on behalf of more than 82,000 members nationwide.

I am writing to express our opposition to your legislative proposal to repeal the “Non-Discrimination in Health Care Providers” provision of section 2706(a) of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). We believe this provision will have a positive impact on expanding access and lowering the cost of healthcare. While massage therapists do not diagnose medical conditions, they do develop, implement, and modify massage therapy treatment plans as their primary service.

When massage therapy is a covered benefit of a health plan, it is not uncommon for an insurance company to reimburse massage provided by a physical therapist, chiropractor, or osteopathic doctor – but not massage therapy provided by a massage therapist. Evidence shows that massage therapy, especially when performed by a massage therapist, is a cost-effective delivery method of health care. Patients are currently being denied access to a massage therapist, whose primary service is the manipulation of the soft tissue, and are required by insurance companies to see another provider, who provides massage therapy as an ancillary service at a more costly rate. Access to a variety of providers results in greater accessibility and affordability.

In ABMP’s view, if a health plan covers a particular treatment, the carrier should not be permitted to exclude coverage for treatment of that condition by any provider who is regulated by the state and is providing services within the applicable scope of practice.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at jean@abmp.com or 800-458-2267 extension 645.

Sincerely,

Jean Robinson, Government Relations Director