



1350 CONNECTICUT AVENUE NW  
SUITE 900  
WASHINGTON, DC 20036  
(202) 459-6313 • (202) 459-6308 FAX  
[www.aqnhc.org](http://www.aqnhc.org)

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The Honorable Sander Levin  
Chairman  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chairman  
Senate Finance Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Chairman Baucus:

On behalf of the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care (AQNHC), I am writing to you in strong support of the American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act. There are many far reaching positive aspects of this legislation. From the perspective of the skilled nursing sector, we are particularly pleased that you have chosen to provide a six month extension of the temporary increase in Federal Medicaid Matching Rate (FMAP). Given the dire economic problems facing the states and the difficult circumstances facing providers with Medicaid reimbursement, this provision makes good sense and is responsive to the tough economic situation in many states.

Adequate and consistent Medicare and Medicaid funding is directly linked with high care quality and proper staffing, which cannot be achieved without stable government support. For the millions of vulnerable frail, elderly and disabled Americans who depend upon on skilled nursing care and long term care services, your bill represents the kind of help that is needed now to protect quality care and to preserve the jobs of the dedicated front line staff, who are working to improve the quality of life for those entrusted to their care.

We are also very appreciative of the provision to repeal the delay of RUGs IV which will ultimately allow this to go into effect on October 1, 2010, along with the other payment changes contemplated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

In addition, we commend you for providing increases to the Medicare physician payment rates. This is a critical issue for the physicians who provide valuable services to patients in skilled nursing facilities. We also applaud the salutary effect that increased funding for the physician fee schedule will have on payments for therapy services.

There are many other provisions in the bill which will help skilled nursing facilities as employers, as well as their employees and the patients they serve.

We thank you for crafting this legislation and we are pleased to provide our strong support. We look forward to working with you to help advance the passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Alan G. Rosenbloom  
President