



May 20, 2016

The Honorable Pat Tiberi
Chairman, Ways and Means Health Subcommittee
1203 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim McDermott
Ranking Member, Ways and Means Health Subcommittee
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Tiberi and McDermott:

On behalf of the more than 5,400 ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) in the United States, the Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA) expresses its support for H.R. 5273, the ‘Helping Hospitals Improve Patient Care Act of 2016’, and thanks you for including Section 203 to protect surgeons who see most of their Medicare patients in the ASC setting.

This provision would correct a flaw in Medicare’s physician payment system that could unintentionally dissuade practitioners from choosing the lower-cost setting to provide care. It would provide a short-term exemption for ASC-practicing physicians from current and pending Medicare requirements that eligible physicians use certified electronic health technology (CEHRT). This reasonable accommodation responds to the fact that there is no CEHRT available for the ASC setting, and gives the ASC community time to develop standards for an EHR that will meet the special needs of this setting.

By allowing this exemption, Section 203 of H.R. 5273 will provide ASCs with time to assure that EHR systems can be developed and implemented that can meet the needs of both the physicians who practice in the facilities and the patients they serve. ASCA is grateful of your understanding of the complexity and challenges associated with developing such systems, and the real concerns that our members have about purchasing and implementing the wrong system—Section 203 is a thoughtful and appropriate response to those concerns.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to the swift passage of H.R. 5237 and are eager to work with you and your colleagues to ensure its enactment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Prentice", is written over a thin vertical line.

William Prentice
Chief Executive Officer
Ambulatory Surgery Center Association