July 10, 2009

Dear Representative Ross,

On behalf of the 75 members of the Alabama Academy of Audiology, I write to thank you for your recent sponsorship and introduction of the Medicare Hearing Health Care Enhancement Act of 2009, H.R. 3024. Our Academy enthusiastically endorses this bill that would eliminate the need for Medicare patients to obtain a physician referral prior to visiting an audiologist for an exam.

We believe, as you do, that Medicare beneficiaries deserve the same access to quality hearing health care afforded to our nation’s veterans, through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as well as members of Congress and federal employees through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). As you know, the Department of Veterans Affairs has allowed veterans to directly access an audiologist since 1992. The VA has demonstrated that direct access to audiology services provides high-quality hearing health care that is cost effective.

H.R. 3024 would provide easier and more efficient avenues of evaluation and treatment for Medicare beneficiaries with audio/vestibular disorders. The Alabama Academy of Audiology commends you in this effort.

Thank you for your work to improve access to quality hearing health care for our patients.

Respectfully,

Dr. Dana M. Walchek, Au.D.