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Official Journals

*American Journal of
Respiratory and
Critical Care Medicine* ®

*American Journal of
Respiratory Cell and
Molecular Biology*®

*Proceedings of the
American Thoracic Society*

Internet: www.atsjournals.org

October 10, 2007

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20036

The Honorable Michael Ross
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Lincoln and Representative Ross:

On behalf of the 18,000 members of the American Thoracic Society (ATS), I want to thank you for moving forward with legislation to expand the scope of services provided by advanced respiratory therapists to Medicare beneficiaries.

As you know, advanced respiratory therapists are clinicians with bachelors degree training in respiratory care medicine and demonstrated competency in their field. These advanced clinicians provide Medicare beneficiaries with important access to a wide range of care for respiratory ailments. Under current law, advanced respiratory therapists can provide direct care to Medicare beneficiaries only if such services are provided under the direct supervision of a physician.

While direct physician supervision is appropriate for a number of services provided by advanced respiratory therapists, there also are a number of services provided that should not require direct supervision. Your legislation addresses these services and would allow advanced respiratory therapists, employed by a physician, to provide appropriate respiratory care services under the general supervision of the employing physician. The legislation will give physicians and advanced respiratory therapists the flexibility to provide needed care to Medicare beneficiaries in the outpatient, physician's office or patient's home setting. Consequently, the American Thoracic Society is pleased to endorse this legislation with our support.

Again, we appreciate your leadership in this area and look forward to bringing this legislation to fruition.

Sincerely,

David H. Ingbar MD
President
American Thoracic Society