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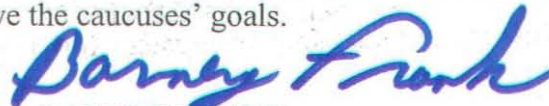
July 20, 2009

Ms. Patricia Kelleher
Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts
31 Saint James Avenue, Suite 780
Boston, Massachusetts 02116-4138

Dear Ms. Kelleher,

Thank you for contacting me to ask that I sign onto two letters being circulated by my colleague from Massachusetts, Congressman James McGovern, about home health coverage under Medicare and joining the Home Health Working Group. I have signed onto the letter about Medicare coverage of home health services, supporting a full market based inflation adjustment for home health payments by Medicare beneficiaries as well as opposing cuts in this area, and I will be working with the other cosigners to ensure that any proposed cuts are not implemented as the budget and appropriations process for the next fiscal year moves forward. As to the second letter, I share the goals that the Home Health Working Group is organized to achieve, and I expect that I will be working with its members in achieving them. However, I must tell you, as a general matter, I do not join caucuses.

Caucuses have recently proliferated. In my experience, they tend to be mostly letterheads and whether or not one is a member in no way affects ones' ability to support the legislation its formation seeks to advance. There are literally hundreds of caucuses that support all sorts of important causes. The reality is that they take up a good deal of time and have no legislative impact that cannot be achieved without a formal and time-consuming organization. Any Member who joined all of the caucuses that he or she generally supported and tried seriously to attend their meetings would find himself or herself unable to spend any time on the legislative activities directly addressing these issues. Thus, because of my time consuming agenda, I have not joined any for many years, with a few exceptions in cases where they are of a limited duration on a pending issue. My general policy is to instead work with the Members who have formed them, as well as other colleagues, on relevant legislative matters – such as cosponsoring specific bills, or signing letters to Congressional leaders or other government officials in support of important projects and initiatives, such as Congressman McGovern's letter on this home health issue, in order to try to achieve the caucuses' goals.


BARNEY FRANK

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