

**THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**
OF THE UNITED STATES

May 16, 2005

The Honorable Jim Cooper
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressman Cooper:

The Catholic Health Association (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations, would like to express our appreciation for your introduction of HR 801, "The Diabetic Retinopathy Act of 2005," a bill which could help prevent blindness in thousands of diabetics every year by adding Medicare and Medicaid coverage of telemedicine based remote screening.



The bill's focus on early intervention in a very serious but preventable symptom of diabetes is consistent with the CHA Board of Trustees' vision of a health care delivery system that is coordinated over time, and which emphasizes prevention, early detection, and minimization of disease progression over the life span. The ever growing number of diabetes cases in this country, and its impact on health, quality of life, productivity, and already soaring health care costs, has made diabetes early detection and treatment a high CHA priority. Diabetes screening and treatment is also a crucial national concern, as evidenced by a wide array of diabetes initiatives, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Informatics, Telemedicine, and Education Demonstration Project.

We look forward to working with your office as this bill makes its way through the Congressional process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Michael Rodgers
Interim President and CEO

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