

Representative Henry A. Waxman  
2204 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Waxman:

For many years your dedicated work on crucial health issues has been appreciated and respected. I am coming to you now for your assistance in another very important health insurance issue.

Each year thousands of children and adults are benefited by their involvement in animal-assisted therapy. Animal-assisted therapy incorporates individuals working with animals to provide physical, psychological and mental development of children and adults with disabilities. The improvements noted through this form of therapy have been remarkable. More and more people are turning towards animal-assisted therapy to improve their lives.

Medical insurance companies in the United States do not currently cover animal-assisted therapy. Animal-assisted therapy is not currently accepted as a reimbursable medical expense despite the fact that medical professionals and physical therapists all have expressed the firm belief that it is a powerful physical and mental form of therapy for their patients. Animal-assisted therapy is readily accepted and covered by medical insurance throughout Europe and Asia, but it not recognized as an approved treatment modality in the United States.

We must change this. Most animal-assisted therapy organizations are non-profit, but they must charge for their therapy sessions. Yet, families with special health care needs face extreme financial challenges. It is crucial that they are given the opportunity to improve their lives to the fullest. Without appropriate medical coverage of this important form of therapy, families are limited to their exposure to animal-assisted therapy because the cost becomes prohibitive

I support bringing this important issue to the attention of Health Insurance Programs.

Sincerely,

Name  
Address