



February 5, 2025

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

**RE: Disability and Rehabilitation Community Endorsement of MedPAC
Nomination of Alberto Esquenazi, MD**

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The undersigned members of the Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation (“CPR”) write to offer our strong and continued support for Dr. Alberto Esquenazi to be appointed to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (“MedPAC”). Dr. Esquenazi is a physician in good standing and is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation (“PM&R”). Dr. Esquenazi has served in various positions of national leadership in health care provider and association organizations throughout his career and possesses a strong understanding, from both a personal and a professional perspective, of the unique challenges that confront individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions through the lens of comprehensive medical rehabilitation and post-acute care. As MedPAC continues its focus on the post-acute care setting, we believe it is imperative to include informed participation on the Commission from experts who understand medical, rehabilitation, and disability policy from a variety of perspectives, especially the consumer and clinical perspective.

CPR is a coalition of national consumer, clinician, and membership organizations that advocate for policies to ensure access to rehabilitative care so that individuals with injuries, illnesses, disabilities, and chronic conditions may regain and/or maintain their maximum level of health and independent function. CPR is comprised of organizations that represent patients – as well as the clinicians who serve them – who are frequently inappropriately denied access to rehabilitative care in a variety of post-acute care and outpatient settings.

Dr. Esquenazi has dedicated his entire career to rehabilitating individuals with significant medical conditions and disabilities and ensuring that they receive the highest levels of care to maximize outcomes and return patients to their healthiest, most independent lives. Dr. Esquenazi is, himself, a beneficiary of rehabilitation, utilizing a prosthetic arm. Dr. Esquenazi

knows firsthand how important it is that policymakers prioritize the voice of the consumer in advancing patient-centered health policy. We urge MedPAC to consider his nomination an opportunity to reflect this patient perspective among the Commission's members.

Dr. Esquenazi received both his Bachelor of Sciences and his Doctorate in Medicine from the National Autonomous University of Mexico School of Medicine, completing his post-graduate work in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Temple University in Pennsylvania. His long and successful career includes a wide body of experience, all related to the rehabilitation of patients with disabilities and chronic conditions. He has served in leadership positions with national patient, physician, and hospital associations, including for several members of CPR.

Dr. Esquenazi is not just a clinician with a wide range of experiences serving individuals with disabilities and rehabilitation needs but is also keenly attuned to policy and research issues in the post-acute care sector, one of the areas on which MedPAC has devoted much attention in recent years. For instance, Dr. Esquenazi is a member of several national and international professional, educational, research societies and review panels. He has served as a member of the Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") Task Force on Medical Rehabilitation Research, and he also served as chair of the National Advisory Board on Medical Rehabilitation Research ("NABMRR") of the Eunice Kennedy Schriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the National Institutes of Health ("NIH"). Dr. Esquenazi has also previously served as an advisor for the Department of Veterans Affairs Oversight Committee for Rehabilitation Services.

As we have expressed to the Commission in the past, our organizations have been concerned with the level of discourse during MedPAC meetings on post-acute care issues. In fact, several MedPAC members have explicitly expressed their unfamiliarity with inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and other settings of post-acute care that are critically important to Medicare beneficiaries with injuries, illnesses, disabilities, and chronic conditions. Expanding the Commission's expertise in this area is essential, particularly as MedPAC continues to consider dramatic recommended changes to the post-acute care landscape. Dr. Esquenazi's voice as a commissioner would add the necessary level of real-world experience and patient understanding that is too frequently lacking in these discussions.

In recent years, CPR has supported the nomination of a medical rehabilitation physicians with expertise in post-acute care to bring a broader perspective to MedPAC on these issues. This is the third year in a row that CPR has supported the nomination of Dr. Esquenazi, but we also supported Dr. Bruce Gans in 2022, and Dr. Dexanne Clohan in 2021. While these fine candidates were ultimately not selected to serve as a MedPAC commissioner, we feel our support of Dr. Esquenazi this year remains particularly strong because of the dual perspectives Dr. Esquenazi represents, that of post-acute care clinicians and patients.

For these reasons, we strongly recommend the appointment of Dr. Esquenazi to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of our endorsement of Dr. Esquenazi's candidacy to be appointed to MedPAC. Should you have any further questions, please contact Peter Thomas and Michael Barnett, coordinators for CPR, by e-mailing Peter.Thomas@PowersLaw.com and Michael.Barnett@PowersLaw.com or by calling 202-466-6550.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Members of the Coalition to Preserve Rehabilitation

ACCSES

ALS Association

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine

American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association

American Music Therapy Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

American Spinal Injury Association

American Therapeutic Recreation Association

Amputee Coalition

Association of Academic Physiatrists

Association of Rehabilitation Nurses

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Brain Injury Association of America*

Center for Medicare Advocacy*

Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation*

Falling Forward Foundation*

National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics

National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies

National Athletic Trainers' Association

RESNA

United Spinal Association*

****Member of the CPR Coalition Steering Committee***