

June 21, 2011

The Honorable Kay Granger
U.S House of Representatives
320 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable C.A. Ruppertsberger
U.S House of Representatives
2453 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charlie Gonzalez
U.S House of Representatives
1436 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Granger, Congressman Ruppertsberger, and Congressman Gonzalez,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, thank you for introducing H. Res. 295, a resolution centered on the needs of patients with atrial fibrillation (AF).

With your leadership, this resolution will build upon multi-stakeholder efforts to enhance the quality of care delivered to patients suffering from AF. The resolution also aims to promote increased awareness of atrial fibrillation, improve patient safety, advance AF research and education, and foster appropriate medical care for AF patients.

As you know, AF is predominantly diagnosed in the elderly population. The prevalence of AF will increase with the growing Medicare population. By 2050, the prevalence of AF is projected to increase to 5.6 million, almost 90 percent of whom will be 65 years and older. Early diagnosis and better management are imperative public health challenges. If undetected or untreated, AF is associated with an increased risk of stroke; when not managed properly, AF is likely to worsen, making some treatments ineffective. Consequently, the implications of not detecting and effectively managing AF are not only costly from a quality of life perspective, but from an economic perspective as well. It is estimated that it costs at least \$15.7 billion annually to treat patients newly diagnosed with AF, with hospitalizations accounting for the greatest share of that cost. Because AF disproportionately affects the elderly, the Medicare program absorbs a majority of the cost burden.

Successfully managing patients with AF requires an investment in early detection, optimal treatment, care coordination, data collection, performance measurement, and medical research. This is why passage of H. Res. 295 is important to our organizations.

Over the next few months, our organizations will help secure broad support of the resolution by encouraging your House colleagues to co-sponsor H. Res. 295. Once again, we thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research
American College of Cardiology
American Heart Association/American Stroke Association
American Osteopathic Association
Heart Rhythm Society

Mended Hearts

National Blood Clot Alliance

National Council of Women's Organizations

Society for Women's Health Research

StopAfib.org

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease