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FASA COMMENDS REPRESENTATIVES MEEK & HERGER FOR LEADERSHIP IN ASC PAYMENT REFORM

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (APRIL 2, 2007) – FASA, the national association representing ASCs, is commending Representatives Kendrick Meek (D-FL) and Wally Herger (R-CA) for their leadership in impacting change to expand Medicare beneficiary access to critical surgical services.

Representatives Meek and Herger recently introduced the Ambulatory Surgical Center Modernization Act of 2007 (HR 1823), which is patterned after the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission's recommendation that ASCs should be authorized to perform and receive Medicare facility payments for any surgical service, except for those procedures where (1) the HHS Secretary identifies a specific risk concerning a certain procedure being performed in an ambulatory surgical setting, or (2) an overnight stay is required. HR 1823 also links ASC payments to the payment system of hospital outpatient departments.

According to FASA President Kathy Bryant, "Over the past three decades, ASCs have continued to meet America's surgical needs by offering patients a better way to have surgery. Eighty percent of all surgeries in America today are outpatient, and one out of every five of these is performed in an ASC. This legislation will go a long way toward ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries have the same access to ASC services others in the community have had for many years."

FASA Chair Allen Hecht explained, "ASCs throughout the country have a long-standing history of providing high-quality care, exemplary patient safety, efficiency and outstanding patient satisfaction. This legislation would enable Medicare beneficiaries to make apples-to-apples comparisons when evaluating sites of care and save money on their outpatient surgery. It will also save money for the Medicare and Medicaid programs."

Representatives Meek and Herger explain in their letter to other members of Congress inviting cosponsorship of the legislation, "Medicare patients should have maximum choice in where they receive their surgery and should be able to take advantage of cost-effective alternatives to hospitals. This bill would expand beneficiary choice and reduce patients' out-of-pocket expenditures."

FASA President Kathy Bryant summed up the industry's support of the bill saying, "ASCs, physicians and other health care providers all are working to expand consumer choice and transparency and improve patient care. The Meek/Herger bill helps accomplish those goals."

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FASA, the nation's largest association of ASCs, is a national nonprofit association representing the interests of those who operate and seek the services of ambulatory surgery centers throughout the nation. The organization represents more than 2,200 member ASCs, the professionals who provide care and services in such ASCs and the patients who seek care there. Visit FASA online at www.fasa.org.