



APR 15 2009

The Honorable Joe Barton
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Barton:

Thank you for your letter to the Acting Administrator concerning the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' proposed National Coverage Determination not to cover computed tomography colonography (CTC) under Medicare's colorectal cancer screening benefit. She has asked me to respond to you directly.

The public comment period on the proposed decision ended on March 13, and we are in the process of reviewing each comment. We are carefully reviewing comments submitted by the major medical professional societies including the American Cancer Society, the American College of Radiology, and the American Gastroenterological Association. In addition, on March 3, my staff met with representatives from the above societies to discuss their comments.

Our final National Coverage Determination, which we expect to issue in May, will reflect all recently published clinical evidence. We will also carefully weigh issues related to patient access in our decision making.

I appreciate your interest in this important matter and hope this information is helpful. I will also provide this response to the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry M. Straube, MD".

Barry M. Straube, M.D.
CMS Chief Medical Officer
Director, Office of Clinical Standards and Quality
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services