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Stephen C. Hammill, M.D.
Cardiovascular Diseases
& Internal Medicine

June 23, 1999

The Honorable Paul Wellstone
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Wellstone:

As Professor of Medicine and Director of Electrophysiology at Saint Marys Hospital and Mayo Clinic, I am writing to express my concern about reports that Senator Richard Durbin may propose legislation to restrict the reprocessing of medical devices labeled for single use. Such legislation would have a seriously negative economic impact on our Electrophysiology Program at Saint Marys Hospital.

The Electrophysiology Program at Mayo has sought to provide the highest quality care while maintaining a cost-efficient approach. For more than 20 years, the catheters used in electrophysiology procedures have been reprocessed at Mayo and have continued to function normally without any evidence of infection. Reprocessing the catheters has allowed us to use each catheter five or six times, greatly decreasing the cost of the procedures. During electrophysiologic testing, we use between two and eight catheters per study with total catheter costs approaching \$300-\$4000. Reprocessing of the catheters has proven to be a safe and effective technique and has allowed us to gain the most use from the catheters, making them as cost efficient as possible.

I am greatly concerned that any legislation to add new and unnecessary regulatory requirements for the reprocessing of medical devices would add tremendous costs to the electrophysiology study and achieve no benefit for patients. I would appreciate you not supporting this type of legislation, and I would be happy to provide any additional information you might desire.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Hammill, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Director, Electrocardiography
and Electrophysiology Laboratories

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