October 23, 2017

The Honorable Larry Bucshon, MD
U.S. House of Representatives
1005 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
225 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bucshon and Scott:

On behalf of the more than 13,500 members of the American Academy of Dermatology Association (Academy), I am writing to express the Academy’s support for H.R. 3928, the Truth in Healthcare Marketing Act of 2017. This legislation is an important step toward ensuring transparency of health care provider qualifications in their marketing to potential patients.

The AADA believes that those who regulate and deliver medical care have an obligation to inform consumers of the qualifications and limitations of the persons providing their care prior to treatment in order to minimize the difficulty associated with navigating our healthcare system.

As dermatologists, our utmost concerns are quality patient care and patient safety. Quality patient care includes evaluating a patient’s needs and current condition, selecting an appropriate course of treatment, and providing adequate information and follow-up care. It is not only essential to provide the highest quality care, but it is just as important that patients understand and are comfortable with who is providing those services. Our patients have the right to know the credentials and the level of training of that person making important medical diagnoses, pushing medications into an intravenous line, using a scalpel, or pointing a laser at their face, torso, arms, or legs.

A recent survey conducted by the American Medical Association’s Scope of Practice Partnership (SOPP) confirms increasing patient confusion regarding the many types of health care providers - including physicians, nurses, physician assistants, technicians, and other varied providers. The survey revealed that 44 percent of patients believe it is difficult to identify who is a licensed medical doctor and who is not by reading what services they offer, their title, and other licensing credentials in advertising or other marketing materials.

H.R. 3928 will empower patients by improving transparency in healthcare provider-related advertisements and marketing. In addition, the legislation provides modest, yet meaningful,
increases in resources to marketplace regulators so they can effectively enforce federal consumer protection laws pertaining to the healthcare setting.

The AADA strongly supports the physician-led, team-based model of health care delivery and recognizes the vital role all providers play in the health care delivery system. However, ambiguous provider nomenclature, misleading advertisements, and the myriad of individuals one encounters in each point of service can exacerbate patient uncertainty about who is providing a health care service.

Many patients are reluctant to ask their health care professional about one’s training and certification during a visit. H.R. 3928 would help set the record straight before the patient enters the doctor’s office and would provide patients with the necessary information concerning who is providing their health care. On behalf of the AADA, we look forward to working with you towards the bill’s passage. For further information, please contact Blake McDonald, Manager of Congressional Policy for the AADA, at bmcdonald@aad.org or (202) 712-2608.

Sincerely,

Henry W. Lim, MD, FAAD
President
American Academy of Dermatology Association