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June 16, 2025

Chris Wright  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20585

**SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY**

**RE: Comments on Rescinding New Construction Requirements Related to  
Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs or Activities; Direct Final Rule**

Dear Secretary Wright,

On behalf of the more than 10,000 physical medicine and rehabilitation physicians of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R), I am writing to address serious concerns about the direct final rule, "Rescinding New Construction Requirements Related to Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs or Activities." AAPM&R is the national medical specialty organization representing physicians who are specialists in physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R). PM&R physicians, also known as physiatrists, treat a wide variety of medical conditions affecting the brain, spinal cord, nerves, bones, joints, ligaments, muscles, and tendons. PM&R physicians evaluate and treat injuries, illnesses, and disability and are experts in designing comprehensive, patient-centered treatment plans. Physiatrists utilize cutting-edge as well as time-tested treatments to maximize function and quality of life.

AAPM&R and our member physicians advocate on behalf of individuals living with disabilities and disabling conditions on a daily basis and are extremely concerned about the impact and implications of the final rule as written that would roll back more than 50 years of precedent related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For decades, the Academy has worked diligently alongside legislators and policy makers to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities that would be severely threatened as a result of this new policy.

Further, the Academy is deeply concerned that the final rule did not undergo a public comment period as is typical with any new policy of this nature and clearly a necessity for an issue with such wide-ranging effects. To that end, we respectfully request that the final rule be withdrawn and that relevant stakeholders be invited to provide input on any



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proposed policy moving forward. AAPM&R stands willing to participate in any future dialogue on this subject. Please do not hesitate to contact Academy staff, Melanie Dolak, MHA, Associate Executive Director of Health Policy and Practice Services, at [mdolak@aapmr.org](mailto:mdolak@aapmr.org) or 847-737-6020 if we can be of further assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Laker". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "S" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Scott Laker, MD, FAAPMR

President

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R)