



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Washington, DC) – The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) recognizes the necessary actions Congress must take in the next few days to prevent the dramatic 27.4 percent cut in Medicare physician payments. While this action will provide modest reassurances to beneficiaries that they will have continued access to their physicians for the next 10 months, it cast further doubts on the sustainability of the Medicare program as a reliable health care program for physicians and other health care providers.

The AOA is deeply disappointed that Congress continues to squander opportunities to repeal the flawed sustainable growth rate formula (SGR). This “deal” is simply a continuation of the same failed short-term, stop-gap legislating that has characterized this issue for the past decade. It is troubling that Congress continues to operate the nation’s largest and most influential health care programs on an ad hoc basis - providing short-term solutions while compounding the long-term consequences of those decisions. On January 1, 2013 physicians will face cuts of greater than 30 percent and the cost of long term reform will exceed \$350 billion.

This scenario was avoidable. A number of courageous lawmakers, from both parties and both Chambers of Congress, identified and put forth a fiscally responsible proposal that would have repealed the SGR and placed Medicare on a more stable financial path. This proposal was roundly rejected without a vote or public debate. Still, the AOA believes we are closer to repealing the SGR today than any other point in the past 10 years. There is an appreciation for the financial burden this failed policy is having on the Medicare program and the negative impact its continued application has on access to care for millions of seniors and military families. The AOA remains committed to working with Congress to find those policies that can be enacted into law that will repeal the SGR, create equitable delivery and payment systems, and ensure the future viability of the Medicare program.

We urge Congress to avoid the tempting opportunities to focus on what can’t be done and set their eyes on what might be achievable. We urge them to take advantage of the next 10 months as an opportunity to finally achieve permanent repeal of the SGR.

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The American Osteopathic Association proudly represents more than 78,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) practicing in 31 specialties and subspecialties, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs, is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical colleges; and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org.