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January 20, 2012

The Honorable Dave Camp
U.S. House of Representatives
341 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Camp:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the American Medical Group Association (AMGA), I am writing to thank you for providing a temporary Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula patch through February 29, 2012, and to respectfully request that a longer-term solution be included in the conference report to the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011 (H.R. 3630). As an organization representing multi-specialty medical groups and other organized systems of care, including some of the nation's largest, most prestigious integrated health care delivery systems, we are vitally concerned about the continuing uncertainty fostered in this present environment.

As you know, multi-specialty groups and other organized systems of care, including accountable care organizations (ACOs), are working diligently to provide innovative, patient-centered medical care. So, the threat of a 27.4 percent payment reduction in their Medicare payments on March 1, 2012, and even steeper cuts in future years is detrimental to efforts to provide high-quality services.

We are keenly aware of our country's fiscal condition and existing budget constraints. And while my members find the current temporary SGR patch to be helpful, a longer-term solution would provide medical groups with greater certainty and stability. In addition, a longer-term solution would reduce the administrative costs – federal and private – that accumulate from these short-term patches.

I urge you to protect physicians and other healthcare professionals from the looming 27.4 percent reduction in reimbursement levels and to provide medical groups with long-term predictability. Moving forward, it is my hope that you can work to develop a stable payment structure for physician services. That structure should take into account physician practice costs and, at the same time, reward physicians based on quality of care, rather than quantity of care.

Representative Camp

January 20, 2012

Page Two

Thank you for your consideration of my request. As you work to achieve your conference committee objectives, my members and I stand ready to work with you on solutions to the SGR formula and other health issues that affect medical groups. If I can provide you with any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or my public policy staff at: (703) 842-0769.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald W. Fisher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "W".

Donald W. Fisher, PhD, CAE
President and CEO