

AMA: Trustees Report Shows Need for Action to Stop Looming Medicare Cut

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Statement attributable to:

Steven J. Stack, M.D.
Chair-elect, American Medical Association

"Today's Medicare Trustees report is clear – without congressional action, physicians who care for Medicare patients will face a devastating cut of 30.9 percent on January 1.

"Nothing is more critical to the Medicare program than patients' ability to access the physicians they want and need to see. Medicare physician payments have been nearly frozen for a decade, while the cost of caring for patients has increased by more than 20 percent. When that drastic payment gap is combined with the ongoing threat of devastating cuts, an access to care crisis for patients becomes a serious concern.

"Poll results show that 94 percent of Americans believe a massive cut to physicians, like the one scheduled for January 1, is a serious problem for seniors. There is no doubt that Congress must act, but instead of getting rid of the formula they have put in place 14 short-term patches that stop the bleeding temporarily but do not heal the wound permanently. Due to those delays, the cost of permanently eliminating the Medicare physician payment formula has grown dramatically.

"The AMA is dedicated to ending this damaging cycle and stabilizing Medicare for patients and physicians. We will continue to work with policymakers on both sides of the aisle to eliminate the broken Medicare physician payment formula once and for all."

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