

March 10, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Republican Leader McConnell:

The undersigned organizations urge Congress to begin working in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to enact legislation this year that will eliminate Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and lay the groundwork for adoption of broader physician payment and delivery reforms.

Last year, Congress was required to act five times to pass short-term measures (for as short as one month) to stop Medicare physician payment cuts scheduled for 2010. On three occasions Congress failed to act before cuts were implemented, causing disruptions in processing Medicare payments. These payment uncertainties and delays created serious problems for many physician practices and jeopardized seniors' access to care. Ultimately, Congress and the Administration worked together in a bipartisan manner to develop offsets and pass the "Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act of 2010," which stabilized Medicare physician payments through 2011. It is our hope that Congress can again work together this year to end the cycle of temporary patches once and for all and develop a long-term and meaningful solution to this issue.

Throughout the past year, Senators and Representatives of both parties, as well as President Obama, have expressed support for permanently addressing the SGR. Both the final report of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform and the President's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget recommended eliminating the SGR. Each year a true solution is postponed, the cost of eliminating the flawed SGR formula grows. As work begins on the Fiscal Year 2012 budget resolution, we believe that this is the year for Congress to make eliminating the SGR one of its highest priorities.

The physician community is committed to taking a leading role in developing and pilot testing payment and delivery reforms that can provide a foundation for replacing the SGR and improving the Medicare physician payment system. We look forward to building upon last year's bipartisan effort to permanently replace the SGR with a workable system that keeps pace with practice costs and ensures that seniors, the disabled, and military families receive the high quality care that they have been promised for years to come.

Sincerely,

AMDA – Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Emergency Medicine
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Home Care Physicians
 American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
 American Academy of Neurology
 American Academy of Ophthalmology
 American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
 American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
 American Academy of Pain Medicine
 American Academy of Pediatrics
 American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
 American Academy of Sleep Medicine
 American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
 American Association of Clinical Urologists
 American Association of Neurological Surgeons
 American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
 American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
 American College of Cardiology
 American College of Chest Physicians
 American College of Emergency Physicians
 American College of Gastroenterology
 American College of Mohs Surgery
 American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
 American College of Osteopathic Internists
 American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
 American College of Phlebology
 American College of Physicians
 American College of Radiation Oncology
 American College of Radiology
 American College of Rheumatology
 American College of Surgeons
 American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
 American Gastroenterological Association
 American Geriatrics Society
 American Medical Association
 American Medical Group Association
 American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
 American Osteopathic Association
 American Psychiatric Association
 American Society for Clinical Pathology
 American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
 American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
 American Society for Radiation Oncology
 American Society for Reproductive Medicine
 American Society of Addiction Medicine
 American Society of Anesthesiologists
 American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
 American Society of Clinical Oncology
 American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons
 American Society of Hematology
 American Society of Nephrology
 American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
 American Society of Pediatric Nephrology

American Society of Plastic Surgeons
 American Society of Transplant Surgeons
 American Thoracic Society
 American Urogynecologic Society
 American Urological Association
 Child Neurology Society
 College of American Pathologists
 Congress of Neurological Surgeons
 Heart Rhythm Society
 Infectious Diseases Society of America
 Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
 Medical Group Management Association
 North American Spine Society
 Renal Physicians Association
 Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
 Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
 Society for Vascular Surgery
 Society of Critical Care Medicine
 Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
 Society of Hospital Medicine
 Society of Nuclear Medicine
 The Endocrine Society
 The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Medical Association of the State of Alabama
 Alaska State Medical Association
 Arizona Medical Association
 Arkansas Medical Society
 California Medical Association
 Colorado Medical Society
 Connecticut State Medical Society
 Medical Society of Delaware
 Medical Society of the District of Columbia
 Florida Medical Association Inc
 Medical Association of Georgia
 Hawaii Medical Association
 Idaho Medical Association
 Illinois State Medical Society
 Indiana State Medical Association
 Iowa Medical Society
 Kansas Medical Society
 Kentucky Medical Association
 Louisiana State Medical Society
 Maine Medical Association
 MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
 Massachusetts Medical Society
 Michigan State Medical Society
 Minnesota Medical Association
 Mississippi State Medical Association
 Missouri State Medical Association
 Montana Medical Association

Nebraska Medical Association
Nevada State Medical Association
New Hampshire Medical Society
Medical Society of New Jersey
New Mexico Medical Society
Medical Society of the State of New York
North Carolina Medical Society
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Oklahoma State Medical Association
Oregon Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Rhode Island Medical Society
South Carolina Medical Association
South Dakota State Medical Association
Tennessee Medical Association
Texas Medical Association
Utah Medical Association
Vermont Medical Society
Medical Society of Virginia
Washington State Medical Association
West Virginia State Medical Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wyoming Medical Society

cc: U.S. Senate