

[American Academy of Family Physicians]

AAFP Welcomes *Medicare Physician Payment Innovation Act of 2011*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement attributable to:
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President
American Academy of Family Physicians

“After more than a decade of struggling to stabilize Medicare physician payment with a formula that ultimately threatens patients’ access to care, the *Medicare Physician Payment Innovation Act of 2011* promises a meaningful solution. We congratulate Reps. Allyson Schwartz and Joe Heck for this thoughtful bipartisan legislation that offers a concrete and positive path to better and more efficient health care.

“This legislation begins the transition to a sustainable payment system and helps our complex system better recognize the value of primary medical care. By providing a 2 percent higher payment rate for primary care services for several years, this bill improves the environment for currently practicing primary care physicians. Equally important, it tells medical students that we recognize primary care as the foundation to a high-quality, efficient health care system. But perhaps the most important feature of this bill is that it provides strong incentives for physician practices to transition to alternative payments systems that will improve care and help control costs.

“We’ve said this before: the flawed sustainable growth rate formula that requires a devastating 30 percent cut in Medicare payment beginning Jan. 1, 2013, has, in fact, destabilized the system and threatened elderly patients’ access to care.

“We applaud this effort to keep our promise to these Americans and we urge Congress to take up this legislation quickly. Only by stabilizing Medicare physician payment can we ensure that elderly and disabled patients will have access to the care they need, when they need it.”

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About the American Academy of Family Physicians

Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 105,900 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care.

Approximately one in four of all office visits are made to family physicians. That is 240 million office visits each year — nearly 87 million more than the next largest medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America's underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care.

To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP's positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit aafp.org/media. For information about health care, health conditions, and wellness, please visit the AAFP's award-winning consumer website, familydoctor.org.