

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AARP Presses Lawmakers to Protect People in Medicare for Long-Term

Association applauds House passage of 30-day physician payment patch, calls for year-long solution

WASHINGTON—AARP CEO A. Barry Rand today sent a letter to Congressional leaders calling on lawmakers to find a year-long solution to protect seniors' access to their Medicare doctors. Rand noted AARP's appreciation for the short-term patch passed by the House of Representatives today, but emphasized the need for legislation that ensures stability into the future.

"Recent AARP surveys show that more than 80 percent of our members are concerned that if this pay cut goes into effect they could lose their doctors," Rand wrote. "Our research also shows that our members believe Congress has a responsibility to keep doctors in the Medicare program by providing doctors with a stable payment system."

Rand's complete letter to the leaders follows:

November 29, 2010

Dear Madam Speaker and Leaders Boehner, Reid and McConnell:

On behalf of AARP's millions of members, I urge you to take immediate action to protect seniors' access to doctors by stopping the drastic pay cut now scheduled for January that could drive doctors out of the Medicare program. Specifically, I am calling on you to block this pay cut for one year and to work together in 2011 to find a solution that will provide stability to patients and their doctors once and for all.

While we appreciate the recent action you took to postpone these cuts for another month, as you know, unless Congress acts before January 1, doctors who treat Medicare patients will receive a 25 percent cut in their reimbursement rates. Recent AARP surveys show that more than 80 percent of our members are concerned that if this pay cut goes into effect they could lose their doctors. Our research also shows that our members believe Congress has a responsibility to keep doctors in the Medicare program by providing doctors with a stable payment system.

For more than a decade, Congress has failed to fix the flawed Medicare physician payment system, which has resulted in larger and larger cuts and made it more expensive to fix over time. Our members recognize that there is little hope Congress will reach a permanent solution in the post-election session, but older Americans have earned their Medicare and they need and deserve more security than the short-term patches Congress has enacted five times in the last year alone.

To give seniors the peace of mind they can keep seeing the doctors they count on, I urge you to stop the cut for one year and make finding a long-term solution that will protect seniors' access to

their doctors an urgent priority in the new Congress.

Sincerely,

A. Barry Rand

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social welfare organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.1 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's millions of members and Americans 50+; AARP VIVA, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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