

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
HHS Press Office

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A Statement from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

On the need to fix the Sustainable Growth Rate issue upon release of the final Medicare physician fee schedule rule

“America’s physicians are the backbone of our health care system. Physicians are there for us throughout our lives, helping us improve our health and fight off disease. Unfortunately, while Medicare remains strong, physicians are facing steep payment cuts as a result of a flawed 1997 law. Almost every year for more than a decade, doctors have faced this annual threat and the Congress has in turn acted to temporarily prevent these deep reductions from taking effect. We have not and will not let deep cuts to doctors’ payments occur. The Obama Administration is 100 percent committed to fixing the flawed Medicare payment system and protecting Medicare beneficiaries’ access to doctors.

“Earlier this year, President Obama presented a deficit reduction plan in which he once again called for a permanent fix to the sustainable growth rate (SGR) provision so that our nation’s physicians would no longer have to face the threat of draconian cuts year after year. Today we again call on the Congress to quickly and permanently pass the so-called ‘doc fix’ and we pledge to work with legislators on both sides of the aisle to address this issue once and for all. The pattern of threatened SGR cuts and last-minute Congressional rescues is in itself not a sustainable solution and must be remedied. Patients and physicians will both benefit when we take the action recommended by the President and permanently address this issue.”

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