



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

1090 Vermont Ave., Ste. 510 Washington, D.C. 20005
ph 202.414.0140 | 800.962.9008
fax 202.544.3525 | www.osteopathic.org | do-online.org

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2011

Contact: Leann Fox

Director of Washington Advocacy and Communications

(202) 414-0144 | (202) 256-1417 Cell | lfox@osteopathic.org

AOA Expresses Concerns with MedPACs SGR Proposal

(Washington, DC) – Today, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) released a proposal to reform the current Medicare physician payment formula. The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) believes that this proposal would have a chilling effect on our health care system, particularly on Medicare and its beneficiaries.

There is no doubt that we can no longer pretend that the sustainable growth rate (SGR) debt, which currently stands at \$300 billion, doesn't exist and doesn't affect America's Medicare beneficiaries. For the past decade, Congress has taken short-term approaches to this issue – averting immediate negative impacts, but digging a deep financial hole for future years. In 2005 a permanent solution to the SGR would have cost less than \$50 billion. Today, that cost has ballooned to \$300 billion and will double to \$600 billion over the next five years if we continue to ignore the problem.

We are troubled that in its proposal MedPAC would divert so dramatically from its longtime position that all physicians participating in the Medicare program should receive annual increases in their payments. However, we applaud MedPAC for acknowledging the negative impact the current payment formula has on the Medicare program and for advocating increased Medicare payments for primary care physicians.

We support the Commission's continued commitment to advancing delivery and payment models that promote primary care. We strongly support this recommendation and believe that our health care delivery system should always do more to promote patient-centered care through enhanced primary care models such as the patient centered medical home. However, we oppose cuts to other physician services as a means of financing such increases.

###

The American Osteopathic Association proudly represents more than 78,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) practicing in 31 specialties and subspecialties, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical colleges; and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org.