



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

May 9, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Leader Reid and Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the Alliance of Specialty Medicine (the Alliance), a coalition of medical specialty societies representing more than 100,000 physicians and surgeons, we write to **strongly urge Congress to continue working to enact a permanent and meaningful solution to the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula before the end of the 113th Congress.**

Physicians and seniors have waited long enough for Congress to address this significant flaw in our nation's largest health program. Each year since 2002, the SGR formula has called for a substantial reduction in Medicare physician payment rates. In 2002, payment rates were reduced by 5.4 percent. In each subsequent year, Congress has overridden the formula, specifying small increases or payment freezes instead of large cuts. These short-term "fixes" exacerbate efforts to address the underlying problem, add to the overall costs of repeal, and continue to undermine physician and beneficiary confidence in the Medicare program.

An SGR replacement should base physician reimbursements on the actual cost of providing care and allow physicians to make investments in meaningful and relevant care delivery models that aim to improve quality and efficiency and foster patient access to the physician of their choice.

While we were encouraged with the bipartisan, bicameral progress to repeal the SGR, we hope that you do not lose this momentum by further postponing action on a full repeal. The Alliance is on record in support of H.R. 4015/S. 2000, the "SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act of 2014" which addresses many of our core principles.

With only months left in this legislative session, we respectfully request that you work together this Congress to identify appropriate offsets and permanently repeal the flawed Medicare physician payment formula. The Alliance stands ready to support you in taking this critical, fiscally responsible step that would lay the foundation for longer-term sustainability and solvency in the Medicare program.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Mohs Surgery
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Echocardiography
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urological Association
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
North American Spine Society
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Excellence in Eyecare

Cc: Members of the United States Senate and U.S. House of Representatives