March 26, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid  The Honorable John A. Boehner
Majority Leader  Speaker
U.S. Senate  U.S. House of Representatives
S-221 U.S. Capitol Building  H-232 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader  Minority Leader
U.S. Senate  U.S. House of Representatives
S-230 U.S. Capitol  H-204 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20515

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

The surgical groups listed below strongly oppose the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014, which seeks to patch the Medicare physician payment system for twelve months, and we encourage Representatives and Senators to vote against this short term patch. On February 6, the physician community delivered on its promise to unite around Medicare physician payment reform policy in the SGR Repeal and Medicare Payment Modernization Act (H.R. 4015/S. 2000 – SGR Repeal Act). Five days before the scheduled 24.1 percent cut goes into effect, we are extremely disappointed that Congress has failed to enact the SGR Repeal Act.

The Protecting Access to Medicare Act selectively chooses to implement one of the SGR Repeal Act’s most fundamentally flawed provisions, the sections regarding misvalued codes, to “pay for” yet another short term patch, the seventeenth in the past decade. In essence, physicians are paying for their own patch. This action is unacceptable without the full benefit of the SGR Repeal Act. In numerous letters last year, we consistently opposed this flawed provision for its likely disproportionate effect on surgical services.

We are deeply disappointed Congress has lacked the political will to enact the SGR Repeal Act, which would benefit America’s seniors and help stabilize the Medicare program. We once again call on Congress to return to bipartisan, bicameral efforts to resolve budgetary issues and enact the SGR Repeal Act.

Sincerely

American College of Surgeons

American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Society for Vascular Surgery
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

cc: United States House of Representatives
    United States Senate