

March 10, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
United States Senate  
361A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Republican Leader McConnell:

The undersigned organizations urge Congress to begin working in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to enact legislation this year that will eliminate Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and lay the groundwork for adoption of broader physician payment and delivery reforms.

Last year, Congress was required to act five times to pass short-term measures (for as short as one month) to stop Medicare physician payment cuts scheduled for 2010. On three occasions Congress failed to act before cuts were implemented, causing disruptions in processing Medicare payments. These payment uncertainties and delays created serious problems for many physician practices and jeopardized seniors' access to care. Ultimately, Congress and the Administration worked together in a bipartisan manner to develop offsets and pass the "Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act of 2010," which stabilized Medicare physician payments through 2011. It is our hope that Congress can again work together this year to end the cycle of temporary patches once and for all and develop a long-term and meaningful solution to this issue.

Throughout the past year, Senators and Representatives of both parties, as well as President Obama, have expressed support for permanently addressing the SGR. Both the final report of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform and the President's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget recommended eliminating the SGR. Each year a true solution is postponed, the cost of eliminating the flawed SGR formula grows. As work begins on the Fiscal Year 2012 budget resolution, we believe that this is the year for Congress to make eliminating the SGR one of its highest priorities.

The physician community is committed to taking a leading role in developing and pilot testing payment and delivery reforms that can provide a foundation for replacing the SGR and improving the Medicare physician payment system. We look forward to building upon last year's bipartisan effort to permanently replace the SGR with a workable system that keeps pace with practice costs and ensures that seniors, the disabled, and military families receive the high quality care that they have been promised for years to come.

Sincerely,

AMDA – Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Emergency Medicine  
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Home Care Physicians  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy  
American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery  
American Academy of Pain Medicine  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists  
American Association of Clinical Urologists  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
American College of Cardiology  
American College of Chest Physicians  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Gastroenterology  
American College of Mohs Surgery  
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Internists  
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons  
American College of Phlebology  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Radiation Oncology  
American College of Radiology  
American College of Rheumatology  
American College of Surgeons  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Medical Association  
American Medical Group Association  
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association  
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy  
American Society for Radiation Oncology  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology

American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Society of Transplant Surgeons  
American Thoracic Society  
American Urogynecologic Society  
American Urological Association  
Child Neurology Society  
College of American Pathologists  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Heart Rhythm Society  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
Medical Group Management Association  
North American Spine Society  
Renal Physicians Association  
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Vascular Surgery  
Society of Critical Care Medicine  
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
Society of Nuclear Medicine  
The Endocrine Society  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Medical Association of the State of Alabama  
Alaska State Medical Association  
Arizona Medical Association  
Arkansas Medical Society  
California Medical Association  
Colorado Medical Society  
Connecticut State Medical Society  
Medical Society of Delaware  
Medical Society of the District of Columbia  
Florida Medical Association Inc  
Medical Association of Georgia  
Hawaii Medical Association  
Idaho Medical Association  
Illinois State Medical Society  
Indiana State Medical Association  
Iowa Medical Society  
Kansas Medical Society  
Kentucky Medical Association  
Louisiana State Medical Society  
Maine Medical Association  
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Michigan State Medical Society  
Minnesota Medical Association  
Mississippi State Medical Association  
Missouri State Medical Association  
Montana Medical Association

Nebraska Medical Association  
Nevada State Medical Association  
New Hampshire Medical Society  
Medical Society of New Jersey  
New Mexico Medical Society  
Medical Society of the State of New York  
North Carolina Medical Society  
North Dakota Medical Association  
Ohio State Medical Association  
Oklahoma State Medical Association  
Oregon Medical Association  
Pennsylvania Medical Society  
Rhode Island Medical Society  
South Carolina Medical Association  
South Dakota State Medical Association  
Tennessee Medical Association  
Texas Medical Association  
Utah Medical Association  
Vermont Medical Society  
Medical Society of Virginia  
Washington State Medical Association  
West Virginia State Medical Association  
Wisconsin Medical Society  
Wyoming Medical Society

cc: U.S. Senate