



November 10, 2015

The Honorable Tom Price
U.S. House of Representatives
100 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Price:

On behalf of the 120,900 physicians and medical students who are members of the American Academy of Family Physicians, thank you for introducing the *Meaningful Use Hardship Relief Act* (HR 3940). This important legislation would give the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) authority to exempt eligible professionals from downward payment adjustments next year by allowing for a blanket hardship exemption. We greatly appreciate your leadership in helping to make available a broad and efficient method to help physician practices continue to make progress in implementing Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems as CMS sorts out this regulatory framework.

CMS did not publish its proposed modifications to the rules for reporting Meaningful Use, Stage 2 until mid-October, allowing physician practices insufficient time to attest to their meeting these rules. However, without your legislative solution, CMS would not have authority to waive the requirements, except by time-consuming, case-by-case determinations of hardship. It should be obvious that family physicians should not be penalized for failing to meet requirements that are impossible to reach.

The AAFP agrees that the use of EHR systems that communicate with all of the patients' physicians and health care providers will make valuable improvements in the provision of effective and efficient health care. We are committed to working with Congress and with CMS in achieving this goal. The Meaningful Use reporting timetable for 2015 threatens to divert us all from that goal, and we gratefully acknowledge your effort to remove this obstacle.

We are pleased to offer you our assistance in passing this measure and in the ongoing implementation of legislation to strengthen our delivery of health care. If you or your staff have questions, please contact Kevin Burke, Director of Government Relations, at kburke@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Robert Wergin, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

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