

November 13, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

We write to you today urging you to consider and pass bipartisan-bicameral legislation to repeal the flawed Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula, reform payment for physicians and other health professionals, and address the equally important healthcare “extenders,” during the lame duck session of Congress.

As you are well aware, Congress has struggled with the threat that the SGR formula poses to reimbursement for physicians and other health professionals and to access to care for seniors and disabled Americans. Sixteen temporary legislative SGR patches have been enacted since 2003.

Unfortunately, while Congress has long debated and acknowledged the flaws of the SGR formula, these repeated short-term patches leave healthcare providers uncertain about payment rates they will receive year after year. Without both repeal of SGR and broader improvements to reimbursement, Medicare payment policy will continue to disadvantage physicians and health professionals who provide better care at lower costs. The result of this volume centric approach will be ever-increasing costs for consumers, employers and taxpayers. We note that far more federal dollars have been spent through these short-term patches than what would have been spent if long ago the formula had been addressed permanently.

We are encouraged that--for the first time since problems arose from the SGR--Congress has developed comprehensive bipartisan, bicameral legislation, with input from stakeholders, to permanently fix the formula and better reward providers for improvements in patient care.

Congress has a unique opportunity to act during the lame duck session of Congress to pass this vitally important legislation and start the 114th Congress without another looming SGR deadline.

We urge you to work together to enact permanent SGR repeal, payment reform and extenders legislation, and stand ready to work with you to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

AARP

Allscripts

American Academy of Audiology

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Nursing

American Academy of Ophthalmology

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Physician Assistants

American Association of Birth Centers

American Association of Diabetes Educators

American Association of Neurological Surgeons

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

American College of Osteopathic Internists

American College of Osteopathic Surgeons

American College of Physicians

American College of Preventive Medicine

American College of Radiology

American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association

American Osteopathic Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American Podiatric Medical Association

American Psychological Association Practice Organization

American Society of Nephrology

Amerinet

AmerisourceBergen

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

athenahealth

Bio-Reference Laboratories

CalPERS

Caregiver Action Network

CHE Trinity Health

Congress of Neurological Surgeons

Council for Affordable Health Coverage

Direct Primary Care Coalition

Easter Seals

Genetic Alliance
Gross Electric
Healthcare Leadership Council
Healthways
Leading Age
Marshfield Clinic Health System
Medical Group Management Association
MemorialCare Health System
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Association of Health Underwriters
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities
National Coalition on Health Care
National Committee on Quality Assurance
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Rural Health Association
Population Health Alliance
Premier healthcare alliance
Society of General Internal Medicine
Spina Bifida Association
Surescripts
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
VHA Inc.
VNAA

cc: Dave Camp, Chairman House Ways and Means Committee
Sander Levin, Ranking Member House Ways and Means Committee
Fred Upton, Chairman House Energy and Commerce Committee
Henry Waxman, Ranking Member House Energy and Commerce Committee
Ron Wyden, Chairman Senate Finance Committee
Orrin Hatch, Ranking Member Senate Finance Committee