

Name
Address
City, State ZIP

Date

Dear Representative or Senator:

I am writing you as a constituent about a problem with the federal Medicare program and TRICARE, which covers the military. I am asking you to fix the way the federal government pays doctors who take care of elderly people since this also affects insurance for military families.

I have learned that the federal government pays my physician for health care services to Medicare patients using a complicated formula that is out of date. This formula, called the “Sustainable Growth Rate” (SGR), is based on U.S. economic factors that are not related to my doctor’s practice. And since the TRICARE health insurance program for military members and their families also uses Medicare for its payment rates, this issue affects military families’ health care as well.

Right now, my doctor is paying for all costs (staff wages, utilities, medical supplies and equipment) at 2010 prices. However, the government is paying physicians at Medicare rates equivalent to those of 2001.

I know that the federal Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) has recommended that Congress replace the old formula with a new one based on realistic and relevant information.

As a patient who depends on my doctor, I want to ask you to do the following:

- Permanently fix the SGR formula.

Here are a few more points that make sense to me:

- Yearly or monthly Medicare payment cuts — nearly 30 percent next year due to this formula — create an unstable program for everybody: patients and doctors.
- If payment rates are not stabilized, physicians may be forced to stop seeing Medicare patients. Older people should not have to worry about their health care.
- Many of America’s physicians are small businesses. They are very committed to their patients, like me, but need to make enough money to keep their doors open, like any business.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my views. I value my Physician and want all physicians to be paid the right amount to provide health care to older people.

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE