

Stop the Upcoming Medicare Reimbursement Cuts

[Your information will be inserted here]

Prefix First Name Last Name

123 Street Address

My City, State, Zip

[Date]

Dear [Official's title and name will be inserted here]

Physicians will experience devastating cuts to their Medicare payments if Congress does not intervene before November 30. Payments for physician services will be slashed 23.6 percent on December 1, followed by an additional cut of 6.5 percent on January 1, 2011. The upcoming cuts coincide with the Medicare physician open enrollment period from mid-November to December 31. During this time, physicians currently enrolled in the Medicare program can change their existing participation status for the following calendar year. Payment cuts will cause many physicians to consider changing their Medicare participation status thus diminishing patient access to a diminishing physician workforce.

To date, Congress's efforts to temporarily address cuts to Medicare physician payments have increased both the size of future cuts and the cost of repealing the flawed payment formula. Last minute legislation that momentarily prevents the cuts jeopardizes the financial management of medical practices, forcing group practices to make operational changes which will severely challenge their ability to provide quality care to Medicare beneficiaries.

The Medical Group Management Association's (MGMA) 21,500 members lead 13,700 group practices nationwide in which some 275,000 physicians provide care in the United States. According to just concluded member research, an astounding 67.2 percent of medical practices are likely to limit the number of new Medicare patients they accept unless Congress takes action to halt the upcoming Medicare reimbursement cuts. In addition to reducing the number of Medicare patients they see, MGMA's findings show 76.6 percent of physician practices will likely delay the purchase of new clinical equipment and/or facilities; 54.0 percent will likely reduce clinical staff; and 45.3 percent will likely delay purchase of electronic health record systems (EHRs), complicating the country's efforts to transition to a more efficient and safe system for patients.

Preventing the Medicare cuts is an action that Congress should take to improve the outlook for all practices and their patients. I urge you to take immediate action and comprehensively address the Medicare physician payment cuts in an update that lasts at least through the end of 2011. This will provide time for Congress and the medical community to develop a long term approach to repealing the flawed SGR formula.

Sincerely,