



March 24, 2015

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The Honorable Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
U.S. Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Brown and Murray:

On behalf of the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM), I am writing to express our support for the recently reintroduced Ensuring Access to Primary Care for Woman & Children Act. This legislation will help ensure access to vital primary care services delivered to this nation's most vulnerable citizens, by extending the payment rates under Medicaid to the level of Medicare rates for two years. SGIM is comprised of approximately 3,500 general internists who represent clinicians, educators, and researchers from all the nation's academic health centers. SGIM members provide clinical services and conduct research and educational activities to improve the health of adults, often with multiple complex, chronic conditions.

Through direct patient care and supervising Internal Medicine residency educational services, SGIM members are responsible for providing primary care services to many of this country's most vulnerable populations who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare. It is through this experience that we recognize how critical it is for Congress to pass this to restore the Medicaid pay parity for the provision of primary care services for the next two years. With 65 million Americans enrolled in Medicaid, receiving Medicare-level reimbursement rates for these services helps attract physicians to participate in the program and ensures greater access to primary care services for these beneficiaries. Studies show that access to primary care is associated with better outcomes and lower costs. Patients who do not have access to primary care physicians tend to delay getting needed care and often end up seeking more expensive care in emergency rooms.

We are particularly pleased to see the new provisions that require the Government Accountability Office to publish a report that examines the use of new payment models in State Medicaid programs and the continued use of expansion of quality measures in the programs. These are important steps to ensure that Medicaid beneficiaries receive high quality care.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to ensure that this important legislation becomes law.

Sincerely,

William P. Moran, MD, MS