



To PROMOTE IMPROVED PATIENT CARE, RESEARCH, AND EDUCATION IN PRIMARY CARE AND GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE

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March 31, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sirs and Madam:

On behalf of the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM), I urge you not to squander this opportunity to vote to reform the Medicare physician payment system. So much work has gone into negotiating a bipartisan, bicameral sustainable growth rate (SGR) repeal bill that Congress should focus on negotiating an acceptable offset, not passing another patch.

Founded in 1978 by a national group of academic general internists, SGIM is committed to promoting research and education aimed at improving healthcare for all Americans. The Society is comprised of 3,000 general internists who provide patient care and conduct research and educational activities to improve the health of individuals, many of whom suffer from complex, multiple chronic illnesses. Our members are leaders in the specialty of internal medicine and hold unique expertise in research, education and clinical practice.

While the House has already voted in favor of H.R. 4302, the "Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014," we encourage you to seize the opportunity to pass the bipartisan, bicameral policy framework articulated in H.R. 4105 and S. 2000, the "SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act." The House and Senate have taken vastly different approaches to paying for this much needed reform. This is the time to negotiate those differences in conference on a bipartisan basis, not scrap the work that has been completed to date and instead implement the 17th patch to the flawed SGR formula.

Never before has Congress been so close agreeing a policy to permanently repeal the SGR and replace it with a payment system that we believe will encourage physicians to provide higher quality care at a lower cost while improving patient outcomes. The time to act and implement permanent reform is now before the 24 percent cut occurs on April 1. We encourage you to take the necessary steps to ensure that a new physician payment system is implemented without interruption in patient access to care. If you have any questions, please contact Erika Miller at either (202) 484-1100 or emiller@dc-crd.com.

Sincerely,

Eric B. Bass, MD, MPH
President, SGIM