

September 12, 2012

The Honorable Senator Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

The undersigned organizations reaffirm our commitment to work with Congress on the shared goal of delivery and payment reform in the Medicare program to promote high-quality, high-value, and better coordinated care to our patients. To reach this goal, adequate and stable investments are necessary so that physicians can modernize their practices to support the coordinated care that will improve health and prevent costly complications, and enable the participation in new payment and delivery models.

As we approach the new year, physicians are faced with the discouraging prospect that our shared goal will be undermined due to the increasing level of uncertainty in the Medicare physician payment system. Looming among the myriad potential barriers to implementing improvements is the two percent Medicare provider payment cut called for under the Budget Control Act's (BCA) sequestration provision. The combination of a sequestration cut and looming Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) payment cut would not only impede improvements to our health care system, it could lead to serious access to care issues for Medicare patients as well as employment reductions in medical practices. **We strongly urge Congress to work diligently during the fall to reach a bi-partisan agreement to pass legislation nullifying the Medicare physician payment cuts called for under the BCA's sequestration provision and the SGR formula.** Sequestration also will result in across-the-board cuts to a wide range of essential programs to ensure high quality and accessible patient care, and we believe that Congress should not abdicate its responsibility to deliberate and make policy decisions on what is important and needs to be funded.

The BCA's Medicare cuts could not occur at a worse time. Medicare physician payments have been nearly frozen for a decade, while the cost of caring for patients has increased by more than 20 percent. Congress still has not revealed a clear plan for addressing the 27 percent cut in 2013 called for by the Medicare SGR formula. While these cuts alone will be devastating to physician practices and patient access to care, physicians are also facing present and future financial penalties if they do not successfully participate in multiple Medicare programs, including the e-prescribing program, the electronic health record meaningful use program, and the Physician Quality Reporting System, as well as the value-based modifier.

Congress has a responsibility to ensure that sufficient funding is available to sustain adequate payment for medical services provided to our nation's seniors and disabled populations under the Medicare program. The status quo is unsustainable, and will do considerable harm to the Medicare program as well as the broader health care delivery system.

We understand that our nation faces significant fiscal challenges; however, these cuts will undermine efforts to achieve broader, long-term reforms to the Medicare program.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association  
AMDA – Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Emergency Medicine  
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Home Care Physicians  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery  
American Academy of Pain Medicine  
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
American Academy of Urgent Care Medicine  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
American College of Cardiology  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Gastroenterology  
American College of Mohs Surgery  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Internists  
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons  
American College of Phlebology  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Radiation Oncology  
American College of Radiology  
American College of Rheumatology  
American College of Surgeons  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association  
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

American Society for Radiation Oncology  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
American Society of General Surgeons  
American Society of Neuroradiology  
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Society of Transplant Surgeons  
American Thoracic Society  
American Urogynecologic Society  
American Urological Association  
College of American Pathologists  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Heart Rhythm Society  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
International Spine Intervention Society  
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
Medical Group Management Association  
National Medical Association  
North American Spine Society  
Renal Physicians Association  
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions  
Society for Vascular Surgery  
Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography  
Society of Critical Care Medicine  
Society of Gynecologic Oncology  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
Society of Interventional Radiology  
Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging  
The Endocrine Society  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Medical Association of the State of Alabama  
Alaska State Medical Association  
Arizona Medical Association  
Arkansas Medical Society  
California Medical Association  
Colorado Medical Society  
Connecticut State Medical Society  
Medical Society of Delaware  
Medical Society of the District of Columbia  
Florida Medical Association Inc  
Medical Association of Georgia  
Hawaii Medical Association

Idaho Medical Association  
Illinois State Medical Society  
Indiana State Medical Association  
Iowa Medical Society  
Kansas Medical Society  
Kentucky Medical Association  
Louisiana State Medical Society  
Maine Medical Association  
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Michigan State Medical Society  
Minnesota Medical Association  
Mississippi State Medical Association  
Missouri State Medical Association  
Montana Medical Association  
Nebraska Medical Association  
Nevada State Medical Association  
New Hampshire Medical Society  
Medical Society of New Jersey  
New Mexico Medical Society  
Medical Society of the State of New York  
North Carolina Medical Society  
North Dakota Medical Association  
Ohio State Medical Association  
Oklahoma State Medical Association  
Oregon Medical Association  
Pennsylvania Medical Society  
Rhode Island Medical Society  
South Carolina Medical Association  
South Dakota State Medical Association  
Tennessee Medical Association  
Texas Medical Association  
Utah Medical Association  
Vermont Medical Society  
Medical Society of Virginia  
Washington State Medical Association  
West Virginia State Medical Association  
Wisconsin Medical Society  
Wyoming Medical Society

cc: Members, US Senate