

SAMPLE LETTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Date)

To a Senator

The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

To a Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

(go to www.vote-smart.org for fax number, e-mail addresses)

Dear Senator (last name): Dear Representative (last name):

As a primary care physician and constituent, I urge you to stop the Medicare payment cut that will take place after July 1, 2008, and guarantee an 18-month positive update so that Congress and the White House can work on fixing the Medicare payment program.

Unless Congress acts, primary care doctors like me will be hit with a decrease of more than 10 percent in payments after July 1. This sort of shifting Medicare reimbursement makes it harder for me to take new Medicare patients - I simply can't afford it. I want to keep the doors of my practice open to new patients - but I need Medicare payments that reflect the cost of doing business.

Congress must replace the current, confusing Medicare physician payment formula that determines payment amounts. We need a new formula that makes sense and provides predictable annual increases that reflect the cost of providing care to patients. Primary care physicians deliver the primary and preventive care seniors need to stay well and to better manage chronic conditions - the leading drivers of health care spending. As the population ages, primary care physicians are positioned to keep seniors healthy and cut U.S. health care costs. But, we can't do it unless Congress acts now.

If you knew your salary had not been raised in 7 years and were told you would sustain a 15% pay cut over the next year and your cost of doing business had increased by 20 % over the same 7 years, what would you do? 60% of doctors say they will not accept new Medicare patients. 30% of Medicare beneficiaries have trouble now finding a new primary care physician.

I urge you to help primary care physicians, like me, stay in business so that I can continue providing quality care for America's elderly. Please stop the payment cut by July 1 and ensure an 18-month positive update to the Medicare physician payment rate.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Address)
(Phone)
(Email)