



American Academy
of Family Physicians



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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Physician and Congressional Leaders Convene on Capitol Hill Discuss the Future of Access to Care under Medicare

(Washington, DC) – Today, the president of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), along with the Chief Executive Officers of the American College of Physicians (ACP) and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), met with House and Senate Democratic and Republican Leadership. During the meetings the groups discussed legislative strategies aimed at reforming the flawed Medicare physician payment formula. Combined, the organizations represent more than 300,000 physicians nationwide.

“Physicians need some degree of stability and predictability to make the investments in technology and in practice improvement that our patients expect,” said Rick Kellerman, M.D., president, American Academy of Family Physicians. “Our intent here today was to get assurances that Congress will get to the hard work of replacing the broken payment formula for the sake of the physicians and the patients they serve.”

“We all agree that the “pay for” is complex, but mechanisms exist to support the creation of a package that provides positive, stable and predictable Medicare payment updates and provides a pathway to repeal of the SGR,” said John Tooker, M.D., CEO, American College of Physicians.

As Congress returns from Fourth of July Congressional Recess, the groups agree that it is time for the House and Senate to begin some heavy lifting and address the issues impacting the stability of the Medicare program in an open, timely fashion. The groups remain concerned that the continuation of the current physician payment system, even with congressional interventions, is a pathway to decreased participation in the Medicare program and, ultimately, decreased accesses to health care for beneficiaries.

“We are not naïve in believing that accomplishing our goal will be easy. We recognize that this is a complicated and expensive issue. However, the complexity and cost of a solution should not be obstacles to reform,” said John Crosby, JD, Executive Director, American Osteopathic Association. “Congress must take positive steps to ensure that all physicians participating in the Medicare program should receive multiple years of positive annual payment updates that reflect their costs of providing care. Today, we pledged our support to use all resources available to accomplish this important policy objective.”

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The groups agree that Medicare should reimburse physicians in a manner that reflects the costs of providing care to beneficiaries and not be based upon an inaccurate and inequitable financial formula that fails to account for changes in practice patterns, coverage determinations, and new treatment options and technologies.

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Founded in 1947, the American Academy of Family Physicians represents nearly 94,000 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care. Nearly one in four of all office visits are made to family physicians. That is 207 million office visits each year - nearly 62 million more than to the next medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide the majority of care for America's underserved and rural populations. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the AAFP and about the specialty of family medicine, please visit www.aafp.org.

The American College of Physicians (ACP) is a national organization of internists — physicians who specialize in the prevention, detection and treatment of illnesses in adults. ACP was founded in 1915 to promote the science and practice of medicine. Its mission is to enhance the quality and effectiveness of health care by fostering excellence and professionalism in the practice of medicine. ACP is the largest medical-specialty organization and second-largest physician group in the United States. Its membership of 123,000 includes internists, internal medicine subspecialists, medical students, residents, and fellows. To learn more about the American College of Physicians please visit www.acponline.org/index.html.

The American Osteopathic Association proudly represents more than 61,000 osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) practicing in 31 specialties and subspecialties, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for D.O.s and is the accrediting agency for all osteopathic medical schools and health care facilities. More information on D.O.s/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org.