February 10, 2014

The Honorable John A. Boehner  The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol Building H-204 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC  20515 Washington, DC  20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Representative Pelosi:

The undersigned state medical societies and national specialty organizations congratulate House and Senate negotiators on the introduction of H.R. 4015/ S. 2000, the SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act of 2014. Now, Congress is closer than it has ever been to enacting fiscally-prudent legislation that would repeal Medicare’s fatally flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula. It is critically important to build on this work and maintain the momentum.

Congress has been debating the shortcomings of the SGR policy for more than a decade, and now a solution to this failed policy is finally at hand. It is time to take action, and to stop the cycle of short-term patches that merely address the immediate crisis posed by whatever cut is currently pending. Further reliance on this mechanism to preserve patient access to care is fiscally irresponsible and has impeded innovation in delivering health care services for far too long.

To date, Congress has spent $153.7 billion over 12 years on SGR patches, far more than the cost of permanently reforming the Medicare physician payment system. And, because of the cumulative nature of the formula, the cost of these short-term remedies rises each year.

The legislation introduced last week is the product of more than a year of bipartisan, bicameral work to build a stronger Medicare program. Short-term remedies are no longer acceptable. Now is the time to pass a long-term solution to the fatally flawed SGR and establish a transition to a more stable Medicare physician payment policy to better serve America’s senior citizens.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Disability Evaluating Physicians
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Home Care Medicine
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Academy of Sleep Medicine
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Association of Hip and Knee 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 Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
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 Medical Directors Association – Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine
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 Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of Cytopathology
American Society of Dermatopathology
American Society of Echocardiography
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
American Society of Retina Specialists
American Thoracic Society
College of American Pathologists  
International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery  
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
Medical Group Management Association  
National Association of Medical Examiners  
National Association of Spine Specialists  
Renal Physicians Association  
Society for Vascular Surgery  
Society of Critical Care Medicine  
Society of Gynecologic Oncology  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
Society of Interventional Radiology  
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  
Medical Society of Delaware  
Medical Society of the District of Columbia  
Hawaii Medical Association  
Idaho Medical Association  
Illinois State Medical Society  
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Kansas Medical Society  
Kentucky Medical Association  
Louisiana State Medical Society  
Maine Medical Association  
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society  
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Michigan State Medical Society  
Minnesota Medical Association  
Mississippi State Medical Association  
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Montana Medical Association  
Nebraska Medical Association  
Nevada State Medical Association  
New Hampshire Medical Society  
Medical Society of New Jersey  
New Mexico Medical Society
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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: U.S. House of Representatives
February 10, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid       The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader                Republican Leader
U.S. Senate                    U.S. Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol Building    S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC  20510          Washington, DC  20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

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