MEDIA ADVISORY

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Internists to Congress:
Unacceptable Failure to Stop Medicare Cut May Soon
Cause ‘Irreparable’ Damage to Medicare

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Today, the Senate and House remain at loggerheads on how to reverse a devastating cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments to physicians.

Today, Medicare claims are being processed, retroactive to June 1, with a 21 percent cut, which is not enough to even begin to cover the costs of delivering care.

Today, tens of thousands of physician practices are facing the real possibility that they will have to layoff staff, miss payroll, limit how many Medicare and military families they can accept, or even close their doors.

Today, millions of America’s seniors and military families are finding that Medicare no longer is a reliable or stable partner.

*And each and every day* that the cut remains in effect, more and more seniors and military families will find that they can’t get an appointment with a doctor.

*Each and every day* the cut remains in effect, physicians will continue to lose confidence in the ability of Congress, the President, and both political parties to do the right thing by patients.

This loss of trust in government not only harms Medicare and TRICARE, but threatens to undermine physicians’ confidence in the federal government’s ability to manage health care reform effectively.

It is past time for politicians from both political parties and both chambers to stop blaming someone else for the impasse. Physicians and patients don’t want to hear that it is the Democrats’ fault, or the Republicans’, or the President’s, or the Senate’s, or the House’s. They don’t want to hear politicians *claim* that they are for repealing the SGR, as they withhold their vote from any practical plan to achieve repeal.
They want to hear that the people they elected can work together to solve the problem.

They want to hear that the House and Senate have resolved their differences and enacted legislation to *immediately* reverse the 21 percent cut and make physicians whole for the damage already done.

They want to hear that members of Congress, on a bicameral and bipartisan basis, have agreed on a long-term solution to replace the unworkable SGR. Such a solution, at a minimum, would provide stable, reliable and positive payments for all services that cover physicians’ costs, provides for higher updates for primary care visits and preventive services, and lead to repeal of the SGR.

Absent such agreement, physicians and their patients will continue to lose faith in Medicare and TRICARE, causing potentially irreparable and permanent damage to both programs.

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