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July 19, 2017

The Honorable Michael Burgess, MD
U.S. House of Representatives
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Burgess:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our support for H.R. 3120, legislation that would remove the requirement that Meaningful Use (MU) measures become more stringent over time. We believe that this relief is an important step to ensure that physicians and other providers are able to meet MU and Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) requirements and continue to participate in both programs.

Physicians have faced significant problems with the MU program, including poor performing technology, rigid standards, and shifting regulatory requirements. While the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has published regulations to address some of these concerns, the agency's ability to provide relief is limited by the statutory requirement to continually make the program more challenging. CMS has had to repeatedly implement hardship exemptions to avoid creating an unworkable MU program while still following this statutory provision. Indeed, MU participation data have validated our concerns, as many eligible professionals have been penalized under the early stages of the program or have sought hardship exemptions to avoid financial penalties.

Adding more stringent measures makes little sense given that many physicians are now struggling with existing MU requirements and that the program continues to operate on a pass-fail basis. Furthermore, since the MIPS program references the MU statute, we believe this requirement could also impact physicians in the Quality Payment Program and discourage participation before this program has a chance to get off the ground.

Accordingly, we support the relief offered by this legislation and believe such a change can reinforce the significant investments in electronic health records and ensure future physician use of these important tools. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being particularly prominent.

James L. Madara, MD