



JAMES L. MADARA, MD
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

ama-assn.org
t (312) 464-5000

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The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Senator Reid:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association, we greatly appreciate your ongoing personal commitments to repealing the Medicare sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and replacing it with the bipartisan, bicameral policies embodied in the “Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act” (MACRA, H.R. 2). This legislation represents years of bipartisan effort to eliminate the fatally flawed SGR formula and implement new payment and delivery models that will promote high-quality care while reducing costs. In addition to stabilizing the Medicare program for our nation’s seniors, MACRA takes a balanced approach to addressing the health care needs of children and low-income Americans while promoting the long-term sustainability of the Medicare program. We strongly urge that immediately upon the Senate’s return from the April recess this bill be taken up and passed.

As you know, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced it is holding claims for services provided to Medicare beneficiaries and will begin paying them at a 21 percent reduced rate on April 15, 2015, two days after the Senate reconvenes. It is essential that the Senate pass MACRA prior to this time.

The implications of the failure to meet the April 1 deadline have been well documented by CMS. Due to the current claims hold, physicians are struggling over issues such as proper copayment amounts and whether or not to hold all claims until the situation is resolved. Failure to enact MACRA prior to April 15th will greatly exacerbate these issues as payments will be made at reduced rates with immediate implications for cash flow and the ability of some practices to meet payroll and overhead obligations.

These consequences can be avoided by quick Senate action. Therefore we urge that the Senate take up and pass MACRA immediately upon its return. Thank you again for your bipartisan leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD

cc: United States Senate