

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4326

September 6, 2006

**Be a part of the Medicare Solution!
Improve patient access to care
Establish a market-based system for paying doctors
Cosponsor H.R. 5866**

Dear Colleague,

Over the next nine years, doctors participating in Medicare will face annual payment cuts of approximately five percent each year. Not addressing this impending crisis would be negligent at best as it will put frail and elderly Medicare beneficiaries at risk of losing their doctor. The current Medicare physician payment methodology is fundamentally flawed and must be reformed. It is time to address the issue with more than a band-aid.

That is why I introduced H.R. 5866, the **Medicare Physician Payment Reform and Quality Improvement Act of 2006**. This bill seeks to accomplish three main goals:

1. Ensure that physicians receive fair payment for services they provide.
2. Create Quality Performance Measures and improve Quality Improvement Organization performance to improve the quality of care available to Medicare patients.
3. Identify reasonable off-sets to give Medicare physicians a more regular and predictable payment update year to year.

H.R. 5866 ends application of the Sustainable Growth Rate on January 1, 2007 and institutes a single conversion factor: the Medicare Economic Index minus 1 percent. This creates a more market based approach to physician payment by placing more value on actual cost inputs and not an arbitrary volume of services target each year.

The bill also establishes a system of Quality Performance Measures so physicians can voluntarily report data to CMS. Patients can then assess the level of quality their prospective doctors are achieving and decide which doctor they would prefer to see. These measures will be developed in collaboration with physician specialty organizations for core medical services.

As incentive to participate in reporting for performance measures, participating physicians will be permitted to balance bill certain high-income Medicare beneficiaries. Redirecting the stabilization fund from the Medicare Modernization Act will cover some of the cost for this important legislation. Eliminating double payment from Medicare for indirect costs of medical education is another source.

We need your help to make real changes, create solutions, and stop simply talking about the Medicare problem. Cosponsor H.R. 5866 today. For more information, contact Josh Martin at 5-7772 or josh.martin@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,


Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress