

Text of Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Greeting July 15, 2011

“The Independent Payment Advisory Board”

Hello. This is your Congressman, Michael Burgess.

It has been another active week in Washington. In this address I want to take a moment to discuss the debt ceiling talks, and also Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, for the second time this year, came and talked to our subcommittee.

The debt ceiling is dead ahead. President Obama, and leaders from the House and Senate have all been meeting – no deal or plan has been created. For me, it is imperative that we remain fiscally responsible during this process. This includes deciding what level of funding we need to have - and also, this means going back to the 2006 levels of funding. We will be here in Washington next week as the issue continues. While I am not at the table during these discussions, I am monitoring what is happening and what is being offered. Please be assured that I am sharing my concerns - and your concerns - with our leadership.

Our work this week in Washington included a hearing with Secretary Sebelius of Health and Human Services. This is her second visit to our subcommittee this Congress, and I left the hearing with more questions I had than when she arrived.

The health law contains policies that will disrupt the practice of medicine. Along with the many excesses and constrictions in the law, the Independent Payment Advisory Board represents the worst of all worlds. As a doctor, as a Member of Congress, and, quite frankly, as someone who is in their 60s and likely to be a patient someday, I am offended by this board.

The Independent Payment Advisory Board exponentially and inappropriately expands the power of the executive branch, giving an unelected and unaccountable panel of fifteen individuals the authority to make changes to the Medicare program and takes that authority away from the United States Congress. Congress has no say in the board's reports, and yet their recommendations essentially hold the power of legislation. Finally, as a patient, these bureaucrats will be able to cut payments so low that it may make it impossible for our seniors to find a physician.

Secretary Sebelius has more authority than any cabinet member has ever had. This Independent Board is another example of the federal government having too much power and over regulating. The Obama administration has proposed to double down on this board. Their assault on the health care system will rob patients and doctors of their traditional relationship.

The board is not accountable to any constituency, and only exists to cut provider payments to fit a mathematically created “target”. Given that private insurers use Medicare as a benchmark for their own payment changes, this board will have far-reaching implications beyond Medicare for all of our nation's doctors.

To view video of the hearing and my questioning with Secretary Sebelius, please visit my website, burgess.house.gov. Thank you for taking the time to listen. God bless you and your family, and most of all God bless Texas!