

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address August 10, 2012

“Providing a One Year Extension for Medicare Physician Payment Rates”

Hello, this is your Congressman, Michael Burgess. Our doctors are committed to providing the best care possible for Medicare patients. As a physician, and now as a legislator, I am personally devastated at the way our government continues to treat those who care for America's seniors.

The current formula that Medicare uses to pay doctors is unstable and unsustainable, and a permanent fix is needed to ensure that seniors continue to have access to their doctors. Fixing this formula, called the Sustainable Growth Rate Formula, was not even addressed in the president's health care law. Not only was there not a permanent solution, the cuts were compounded by now the appearance of the Independent Payment Advisory Board and later this year's sequestration.

Last month, I introduced HR 6142, a bill that would provide a one year extension for current Medicare physician rates. By providing one more year of stability, we can make a critical initial step towards ridding ourselves of this problematic and inadequate payment system. It is important that we not leave patients uncertain how the upcoming “fiscal cliff” will impact their care.

In 2013, sequestration will hit those who provide Medicare services: doctors, nurses, therapists, medical suppliers, drug providers – and in the end our patients. Health care provider payments will be reduced to an additional 2% - meaning that doctors will receive 98 cents for every dollar's worth of medical care that they provide until 2021. It very well could end up costing them more money to provide the care that their patients need.

Despite Congress' continual enactment of last minute rescues to prevent these cuts from going into effect, the eleventh-hour legislative maneuvers should no longer take the place of a stable and secure solution. Congress must continue to work towards a permanent fix that will solve the issue once and for all, and this bill while not providing that fix, does provide the time.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. For more information about this issue and other issues before the United States Congress, please visit my website at burgess.house.gov. May God bless you and your family. And as always, may God bless Texas.