

November 17, 2009

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I urge you to support the *Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act* (H.R. 3961). It is crucial to pass this legislation quickly to ensure that Medicare physician fees will not be cut by 21.5 percent in 2010, a change that would make it impossible for many beneficiaries to access the doctors they need.

Unchecked, current law requires even further reductions in Medicare physician fees, a loss which will total to a 40 percent cut by 2016. Over the same period, physicians' practice expenses are predicted to rise nearly 20 percent. It is clear that such unrealistic reimbursement rates will cause many physicians to limit the number of new Medicare patients they will accept. When the American Medical Association asked doctors in 2007 how they will respond to the planned 40 percent cut in Medicare payments, 77 percent indicated that they would reduce the number of Medicare patients they treat.

We cannot allow Medicare to reach this dire condition. As the baby boomers join the ranks of seniors that depend on Medicare for their health care, it is imperative to ensure that beneficiaries have a good choice of primary care and specialist doctors. Maintaining access to high-quality physicians is fundamental to a strong Medicare program. H.R. 3961 will halt these severe cuts to physician reimbursement rates, preventing Congress from having to act on a perennial basis to forestall precipitous drops in payments.

I hope you will support the *Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act* to ensure that beneficiaries will continue to have access to the doctors they need. We at the National Committee look forward to working with you to preserve Medicare's capacity to provide strong health care benefits to seniors.

Cordially,

Barbara B. Kennelly  
President and CEO