



MCMS BULLETIN

51 Elm Street • Morristown • NJ 07960 • (973) 539-8888

FAX: (973) 539-9493

E-mail: mcms1816@aol.com—Web address: www.mcmsdocs.org

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Richard J. Claps, M.D.
President

Andrea Donelan
Executive Director

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

SGR EXTENSION!!!!!!

Late in the evening on March 2, the Senate voted 78-19 to pass H.R. 4691, the "Temporary Extension Act of 2010," **which included provisions to extend 2009 Medicare physician payment rates through the end of the month. As a result, the 21% payment cut that took effect on March 1 has been postponed until April 1.**

The bill passed the House on February 25, only to encounter opposition on the Senate floor by Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY), who objected to the legislation being considered as an emergency measure that would not require budgetary offsets. In addition to postponing Medicare physician payment cuts, the bill extended a variety of other expiring programs including unemployment insurance and premium subsidies for COBRA continuation coverage for those whose employment was involuntarily terminated.

Discussions are still underway in the House and Senate on the next steps that will be taken to address the Medicare payment crisis. Proposals are being circulated that would implement still another short-term patch to the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula, including proposals that would postpone cuts for 90 days, 7 months, or through the end of 2010. The AMA and those currently attending its 2010 National Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC, continue to press for permanent repeal of the SGR, rather than repeating the pattern of short-term remedies that serve to make future payment cuts more severe and increase the cost of permanent Medicare payment reform.

We urge all physicians to keep up the pressure, especially in the Senate, for enacting legislation to permanently resolve the Medicare physician payment crisis. Use the AMA's Grassroots Hotline: 1-800-833-6354 or contact Senators Lautenberg and Menendez at the following information:

Senator Frank Lautenberg: (973) 639-8700

Senator Robert Menendez: (973) 645-3030

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Society office. Thank you for your attention to this matter.