

How You Can Help Yourself and Your Physician

Proposed Medicare cuts in payment to your physicians over the next several years will reduce payment to your physicians by at least 31%, while physician expenses are expected to increase at 19%. Right now they want to cut reimbursement by 10% for 2008. Whether or not you are a Medicare patient, this affects you. Whether or not your physician takes Medicare, it affects them. If we do not prevent the cuts, patient access to physicians and services will be affected, as will quality of care. It is both a patient and a physician issue and we need to act together as partners to make a difference.

Here is how YOU can help stop the cuts:

- Write your senators, representatives, and the relevant Committees. **On the back of this sheet we have listed points you may want to include in your letter asking them to stop the cuts scheduled for January 2008**
- Pass on the information and copies of this sheet to family, friends, co-workers, club or association members to increase your impact in Washington.
- Continue to educate yourself about the issue.
- Follow-up with calls to your elected official's offices to let them know that you expect them and the government to co-create ethical health partnerships with both patients and physicians. This is a matter of



Your Florida Senators

Senator Bill Nelson
(Senator Nelson has already gone on record as opposing the cuts, so let him know that you support his decision.)

Washington Office:
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0905
Phone: (202) 224-5274
Fax: (202) 228-2183

Main District Office:
225 East Robinson St., Ste. 410
Orlando, FL 32801
Phone: (407) 872-7161
Fax: (407) 872-7165
Website: billnelson.senate.gov

Senator Mel Martinez
Washington Office:
2 Russell Courtyard (Temp)
Washington, D.C. 20510-0903
Phone: (202) 224-3041
Fax: (202) 228-5171

Main District Office:
Landmark Ctr. 1, Ste. 475
315 East Robinson St.,
Orlando, FL 32801
Web Site: martinez.senate.gov

The government Committees that deal with this issue are:

House Committee on Ways & Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3625
Fax: (202) 225-2610

House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2927
Website: <http://energycommerce.house.gov/>

Contact your legislators in Washington:

www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/6583.html
(This will also highlight current Bills affecting this issue)
(you can contact by e-mail)

www.ethicalhealthpartnerships.org/actionmedicare.html
(enter your zip code on the capitol icon)

For other issues affecting YOUR healthcare, go to:
www.ethicalhealthpartnerships.org/takeaction.html

Senate Committee On Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6200
Majority Phone: (202) 224-4515
Minority Phone: (202) 224-5315



(Talking points for your letters or calls are on the back!) 

The President
President George W. Bush
Web Site: www.whitehouse.gov
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

Washington Office:
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, US 20500
Phone: (202) 456-1414
Fax: (202) 456-2461

Never doubt that a small group
of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only
thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead



Points to make in your letter, e-mail or call:

Medicare program trustees proposed that physician payment rates be cut by 31% from 2006-2013. Cuts of 10% for January need to be stopped.

Why the cuts need to be prevented:

- **To protect access to physicians and services for all patients, not just Medicare patients. Many private insurance companies base their payment rates on Medicare fees, so this affects nearly all physicians and patients.**
 - **Physician practice expenses are expected to increase by 19%.** Payment for many physician services has already been reduced over the past 9 years in spite of rising practice expenses, cost of living, and malpractice premiums. In Florida, the average malpractice premium rate for a general surgeon in 2005 was \$200,000 and in South Florida it is almost \$300,000 per year. **Some physicians will not be able to remain in practice with further decreases in payment while their expenses, including staff payroll, continue to rise.**
 - **The formula used to pay physicians needs to be changed.** Other Medicare providers, like hospitals, are not tied to the law of Sustainable Growth Rate used for physicians. Under this formula, while Medicare plans to cut physician payment, hospital reimbursement is expected to increase 32% in the same period.
- **Managing costs should be focused on chronic conditions, drug prices, and other drivers of increasing health costs, instead of jeopardizing access to care and fostering a system that is unjust to physicians and to patients. You and your physicians should not be penalized for the economy or increased coverage decisions.**
 - **Studies have shown that physician dissatisfaction and stress can contribute to lower quality of care. Neither physicians nor patients want that.**
 - **You expect them as your elected officials to do their part in co-creating ethical health partnership with your physician and with you as a patient.**

Take Action Today!