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TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

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SPEAKER'S TASK FORCE FOR A
DRUG FREE AMERICA

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515
June 23, 2010

FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
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VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
RANKING MEMBER,
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
HEALTH

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I am writing to ask for your immediate action on physician payments under Medicare. The impact of the current 21% cut has created a dire situation in the State of Arkansas.


I read with dismay your statement in today's CQToday regarding your unwillingness to address the cut in Medicare payment rates for physicians until the Senate votes to expand other types of benefits. Your disregard for our nation's seniors and health care providers is evidenced by your holding hostage legislation that will accomplish the very thing you have spoken so passionately about for many months – providing access to health care services.

The State of Arkansas receives one of the lowest reimbursement rates in the entire country, and yet we have one of the largest concentrations of retirees and seniors. Our low cost-of-living and temperate climate attract seniors looking for a place to call home. However, the cuts to the Medicare reimbursements have forced doctors across Arkansas, as well as the rest of the country, to restrict care for Medicare beneficiaries. In some instances, doctors are asking their patients to limit the number of ailments they can discuss in one visit. In other instances, doctors are refusing to take on new Medicare patients. And even still, many doctors are now denying care to adults who are not yet Medicare beneficiaries, but who will soon enter the system. Lastly, there are many doctors who will no longer see their current Medicare beneficiary patients and many more who are considering retirement rather than try to provide care for free.

We have long struggled with the Sustainable Growth Rate formula. Seniors and doctors alike can wait no longer. We must fix this problem once and for all. You have the ability to move forward on legislation that will eliminate the 21% cut our doctors are currently experiencing, while also working with Democrats and Republicans alike to find a permanent solution by identifying offsets for a permanent fix and pay-fors.

As a former Medicare provider, I ask you to take up legislation eliminating this 21% cut in reimbursements and to work in good faith with Democrats and Republicans to solve this problem for the last time. I look forward being part of that group of Members of Congress and to engaging in an open, honest, and positive dialogue on this issue.

Sincerely,


John Boozman
Member of Congress

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