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From: "Stephanie Kaplan" <skaplan@hematology.org>
To: "Stephanie Kaplan" <skaplan@hematology.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 10, 2010 6:39 PM
Subject: ASH Alert to State Societies: Obama Administration Pushes for 13-Month SGR Fix - Join ASH's Campaign to Prevent Medicare Physician Payment Cuts

Dear State Society Leaders,

On November 15, the U.S. Congress will reconvenes for a "lame duck" session. One of the most pressing issues it faces is the need to pass legislation to prevent a 23 percent Medicare physician payment cut from going into effect December 1.

It is critical that physicians in every congressional district urge their members of Congress to act by December 1 to stop the 23% Medicare Physician Payment Cut. If your society does not already have an advocacy campaign to prevent the propped cuts, we encourage you to direct your members to [ASH's campaign](#) today. ASH's site provides a link to the correct congressional office and a sample letter that physicians can use.

Throughout 2010, Congress enacted a series of short-term, stop-gap measures to avert scheduled Medicare physician payment cuts. In June, Congress passed the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010 (PL 111-192). The law postponed the scheduled 21 percent pay cut for doctors and replaced it with a 2.2 percent increase but only averted physician payment cuts through the end of November.

Currently, congressional leaders are discussing passing a short-term 31-day fix to avert the pay cuts when Congress returns in mid-November followed by a longer-term payment fix in December. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) has advocated for a 13-month fix that would last through the end of 2011. However, it is unclear if Senator Baucus will be able to gain the support of enough Republican members to reach the 60-vote majority needed to pass such a measure in the Senate. Consequently, Senate Democrats may be forced to negotiate and agree to a shorter-term fix that is supported by a number of Republicans.

Earlier this week, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced that one of the Administration's top priorities is to avert the scheduled physician payment cuts and confirmed the Administration's commitment to working with physicians. Secretary Sebelius shared the Administration supports for a 13-month extension that was proposed by ASH and other physician groups to prevent the cut and allow Congress time to work out a permanent solution.

ASH has worked closely with its member and other medical organizations in efforts to urge Congress to take action quickly and provide long-term stability and predictability in Medicare physician payment rates. Read more about the financial and political hurdles that need to be resolved and ASH's advocacy for a long term solution. Click here to participate in ASH's advocacy campaign.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Many thanks.
 Stephanie Kaplan
 Government Relations Manager

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