

Reduce health care spending in socially and fiscally responsible manner, ACP to Congress

September 12 2011

Recommendations to reduce federal health care spending in a socially and fiscally responsible manner today were made in a [letter](#) to the Congressional Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction from the American College of Physicians (ACP).

"On behalf of ACP's 132,000 members, ACP is pleased to offer the joint select committee a framework to achieve hundreds of billions of dollars in deficit reduction, eliminate the sustainable growth rate (SGR), and promote improved outcomes and quality." said Virginia L. Hood, MPPS, MPH, FACP, president of ACP.

The letter recommends that a national initiative be established to increase the use of high value care and reduce low value care (i.e. care that has little or no benefit to patients), modeled on ACP's own High Value, Cost Conscious Care Initiative www.acponline.org/clinical_inf.../resources/hvccc.htm; to preserve and broaden Graduate Medical Education (GME) financing by requiring that all payers participate in its funding while allocating funds strategically based on workforce needs; and to preserve funding for key programs supported by ACP.

It also offers specific suggestions for changes in Medicare, federal [health care](#) tax policy and other reforms, "generally consistent" with ACP policies, which the [Congressional Budget Office](#), National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, Bipartisan Policy Center, [Commonwealth Fund](#), and other experts have said could achieve hundreds of billions in budget savings.

ACP said that it believes that physicians need to show leadership by contributing to the discussion on options to reduce spending on Medicare and other health programs. A cornerstone of ACP's proposal is to establish a national initiative to reduce the estimated \$700 billion spent annual on care of little or no value to patients, by providing patients and their physicians with information on [comparative effectiveness](#); redesigning incentives for clinicians and patients, and reducing the costs of [defensive medicine](#).

Dr. Hood noted that "ACP's letter shows that it is possible to promote high value care, reduce the federal deficit, permanently repeal the failed Medicare SGR formula and allow for continued funding of critical programs to expand access and ensure a sufficient supply of physicians. We stand ready to assist Congress in developing such a plan."

Provided by American College of Physicians

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