

Internists suggest congressional actions to improve American healthcare

January 9 2015

It is critical that four healthcare issues be considered in the 114th Congress the American College of Physicians (ACP) today told Senators Reid and McConnell, Representatives Boehner and Pelosi, and chairs and ranking members of the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The remarks were made in three-page letters to both the Senate and House from David A. Fleming, MD, MA, MACP, President of ACP.

Dr. Fleming noted that disagreements among legislators "need not stand as impediments to other needed health care reforms that deserve the support of Republicans and Democrats alike." He said that:

- Congress should repeal the Medicare SGR formula and replace it with a program that creates incentives for physicians to improve quality and to participate in patient-centered delivery systems, including but not limited to Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMHs).
- Congress should continue the current Medicare 10 percent [primary care](#) bonus program.
- Congress should restore the Medicaid primary care pay parity program. This program, which pays primary care physicians no less than the applicable Medicare rates for services provided to Medicaid enrollees, expired at the end of 2014, resulting in average cuts of 40 percent or more to most [primary care physicians](#) who treat Medicaid patients.

- Provide relief from burdensome and unrealistic Medicare "meaningful use" requirements for Electronic Health Records (EHRs), and work with the medical profession to identify and provide relief from other excessive regulatory burdens on physicians and their patients.

Dr. Fleming concluded the letter by saying that, "By promptly taking up the four specific issues described—repealing the Medicare SGR and modernizing payments, preventing further harm to under-valued primary care by continuing the Medicare 10 percent primary care bonus program and restoring Medicaid primary care pay parity, and providing flexibility and relief from the EHR meaningful use program and other excessive regulations, Congress would be able to demonstrate to the American people that partisan differences over the ACA need not stand in the way of reaching bipartisan agreement on policies to improve and support first-line primary care doctors and their patients, to modernize Medicare payments to all [physicians](#), and to reduce regulations that stand in the way of good patient care."

Provided by American College of Physicians

Citation: Internists suggest congressional actions to improve American healthcare (2015, January 9) retrieved 3 October 2023 from

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