

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 30, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
H-232, US Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner  
Republican Leader  
H-204, US Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Boehner:

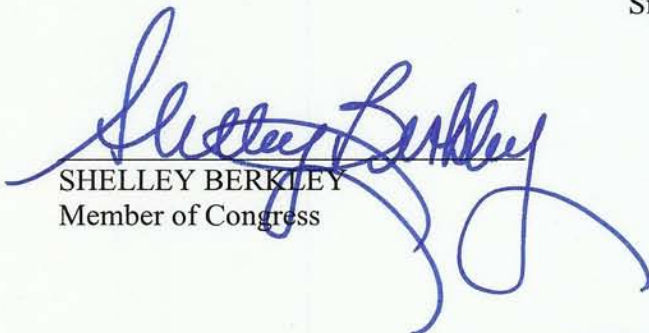
We write to express our concern about the Medicare physician payment system and the effect that future Medicare payment cuts would have on Americans' ability to obtain important medical care. We ask for your support and leadership in enacting legislation this year that would provide a positive Medicare update for all physicians in 2010 and would initiate payment reform to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries—and all Americans—will be able to access the care they depend on their physicians to provide.

Unless Congress acts, Medicare physician payments will be cut 21.5 percent next year and by more than 40 percent over the next decade. These cuts are required by the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula used to calculate Medicare physician reimbursement. In 2002, the SGR led to a 5.4 percent reduction in Medicare physician payments, and only Congressional action has prevented further reductions. Even though Congress stopped these cuts, Medicare payments have not kept pace with rising costs of medical practice, and the uncertainty surrounding Medicare reimbursement from one year to the next threatens patients' access to care by undermining the ability of physicians to plan for the future.

Many ideas have been offered about how to reform Medicare's physician payment system, including resetting the SGR baseline, removing physician-administered drugs from the calculation of the SGR, basing payments on a measure of practice costs, and building on physician-led quality improvement efforts. One idea we cannot support is a proposal to finance increased reimbursement for one physician specialty or one set of physician services by simply cutting reimbursement for all others. While we must find ways to help Americans better manage their care, we do not support proposals that would establish a reimbursement structure that would threaten patients' access to the life-saving care that other physician specialties are trained to provide.

It is clear that the Medicare payment system is broken and Congress must act this year. With your leadership, we believe Congress can come together to avert next year's cut and initiate reforms that not only preserve, but also improve Americans' access to the care that only a qualified physician can provide.

Sincerely,



SHELLEY BERKLEY  
Member of Congress



MARK KIRK  
Member of Congress

Pham Phee

Pat Carr

John P. Barber

Bill Cassidy

Kathy Doherty

Anna Titus

Ron Klein

Paul Brown

Midul E. McMahn

Joe Courtney

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Suzanne M. Kosmas

Leonard Lence

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Phil Singley

Earl Paulson

Trig Z

Devin Nunn

John Fleming

W. Santory, Jr.

Prinini

Steve Kagen, M.D.

~~BMMA~~

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Michael E. Capone

J. Musenberg

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Charles W. Datt ✓

Clark

Judy Biggert

John W. Olver

Dave Leback

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~~T.D.~~

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