



March 24, 2015

Dear Congress,

We commend Congress for working together in a bipartisan manner to permanently replace Medicare's Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR). While this process involves challenging decisions, we respectfully urge lawmakers to pay for increased physician payments using savings achieved from targeted fraud and abuse solutions instead of increasing out-of-pocket costs for America's seniors or imposing across-the-board cuts on the providers on whom Medicare beneficiaries depend.

As a coalition founded on the principle that eliminating waste, fraud and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs should be a Congressional priority, we strongly urge Congress to strengthen Medicare and Medicaid program integrity before it increases the financial burdens borne by seniors or further reduces funding for their medical care.

We are concerned that the SGR reform proposal currently under consideration will increase the financial burden on older Americans by imposing approximately \$35 billion in higher out-of-pocket costs on them. We are also concerned that the proposal would collect another \$35 billion through across-the-board cuts to the acute and post-acute care that Medicare beneficiaries need.

As members of the *Fight Fraud First!* Coalition, we support policy solutions that strengthen America's vital health care programs. In light of official estimates that \$65 billion in improper Medicare and Medicaid payments are made annually¹, our organizations came together in the collective belief that action must be taken now to fight fraud and abuse so that Medicare and Medicaid program integrity can be strengthened and millions of seniors and disabled Americans can be protected.

As a result, we encourage lawmakers to advance proposals that deliver targeted solutions to combating fraud and abuse while protecting beneficiaries, quality providers, and taxpayers. Rather than turning to deeper Medicare cuts or higher out-of-pocket costs that unfairly burden seniors, we urge Congress to achieve savings by implementing policy solutions that fight fraud and abuse.

We respectfully ask that you reject cost-shifting policies and Medicare cuts and instead advance program integrity reforms that achieve savings and protect beneficiaries.

Sincerely,

Autoimmune Related Diseases Association

Caregiver Action Network

Easter Seals

National Grange

Partnership for Quality Home Healthcare

RetireSafe

Veterans Health Council

Vietnam Veterans of America

1. <http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Training/CMSNationalTrainingProgram/Downloads/2013-Fraud-and-Abuse-Prevention-Workbook.pdf>