

American Psychiatric Association

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November 17, 2009

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Psychiatric Association, the medical specialty representing more than 38,000 psychiatric physicians nationwide, I urge you to vote for passage of H.R. 3961, the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act of 2009.

Since 2002, Representatives from both parties have voted annually to block deep cuts in payments to physicians caused by the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula. APA members are very grateful for the year-to-year postponement of the formula-driven cuts, but also clearly recognize that that the SGR – created by Congress – is fatally flawed and requires a permanent solution.

This year, APA members along with other physicians are facing a 21 percent reduction in Medicare payment rates, with additional cuts projected for years to come. Reductions of this magnitude are in no-one's best interest, least of all the 44 million Americans who depend on Medicare for their health care needs, or the military families under TRICARE with payments based on Medicare rates.

The American Psychiatric Association appreciates the difficult choices you must face in your efforts to address pressing national priorities and to represent your constituents back home. We have listened carefully to the various reasons why some Representatives believe they cannot support H.R. 3961. We respectfully submit that there are at least 44 million reasons why you *should* support the bill. Please act to stabilize patient access to Medicare services by voting Yes on H.R. 3961.

Thank you in advance for heeding this most urgent request, which we consider one of the key House votes in 2009. I look forward to sharing news of your support for a permanent solution to the SGR with APA members back home.

For further information on our support for this legislation, please contact Clare Koller with our Department of Government Relations at 703-907-8643 or ckoller@psych.org.

Sincerely,



James H. Scully, M.D.
CEO and Medical Director

