



March 9, 2015

Via First Class Mail

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Chairman
Committee on Ways & Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sander M. Levin
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways & Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Energy & Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Energy & Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for Permanent Repeal of SGR

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The Emergency Department Practice Management Association (EDPMA) is one of the nation's largest physician trade associations focused on providing high-quality, cost-effective care in the emergency department. Together, **EDPMA's members deliver (or directly support) health care for over half of the 136 million patients that visit U.S. emergency departments each year.** EDPMA's membership includes emergency medicine physician groups, as well as billing, coding, and other professional organizations that support our nation's emergency departments. We work collectively and collaboratively to deliver essential health care services often unmet elsewhere to an underserved patient population who often has nowhere else to turn.

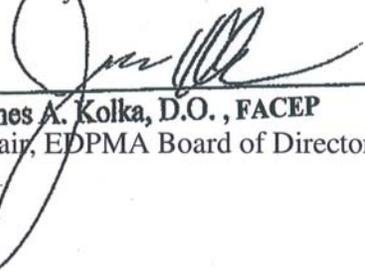
The American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians (ACOEP) represents over 5,200 Emergency Physicians and provides oversight to 56 Emergency Medicine Residency Programs. The ACOEP, founded in 1975, exists to support high quality emergency care, promote and protect the interests of osteopathic emergency physicians, ensure the highest standards of postgraduate education, and provide leadership in research through the Foundation for Osteopathic Emergency Medicine, in a distinct, unified profession.

We are writing to urge you to pass the bipartisan, bicameral policy agreement to permanently repeal and replace the SGR before April 1, 2015. Congress has an historic opportunity to join together in a bipartisan manner to permanently repeal a reimbursement formula that is universally viewed as flawed and that puts the Medicare program in jeopardy with its mandated cuts. We congratulate you on finding common ground and developing a new formula that has the support of both parties, both Houses of Congress, and provider groups.

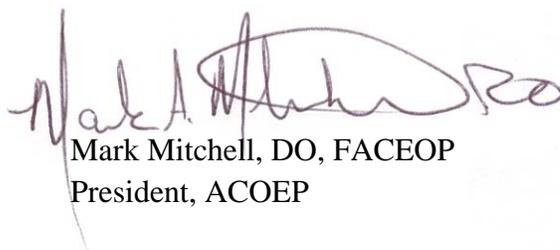
The current draft includes many provisions that we worked with your staff to address. Emergency physicians are often the first point of access for individuals in need of acute care, handling 28 percent of first-contact care in the United States, utilizing only 5 percent of the physician workforce. Emergency Department patients include millions of indigent individuals and Medicaid recipients with little or no access to timely primary care. A 2013 Report by the Rand Corporation entitled "The Evolving Role of Emergency Departments in the United States," (the "Rand Study") finds that primary care physicians increasingly rely on the Emergency Department to evaluate complex patients with potentially serious problems, conduct workups, and provide overflow and after-hours primary care. ED physicians are the major decision-makers in over half of an average hospital's admissions and are critical in helping hospitals fulfill their statutory obligation to provide emergency care without regard to a patient's ability to pay. We greatly appreciate that your staff worked to address our concerns.

We urge you to pass the bipartisan, bicameral agreement to repeal and replace the SGR before April 1, 2015. If this legislation does not get passed, the nation's health care providers will face a devastating cut of over 20% in Medicare reimbursement rates. Please feel free to contact EDPMA's Executive Director, Elizabeth Mundinger, at (703) 610-9033 if we can be of assistance on this topic or in any other area.

Sincerely,



James A. Kolka, D.O., FACEP
Chair, EDPMA Board of Directors



Mark Mitchell, DO, FACEOP
President, ACOEP