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January 29, 2010

Senator Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

I write on behalf of the Emergency Department Practice Management Association (EDPMA), a national trade association representing the interests and needs of emergency department physician groups, and their clinical and business partners. Our membership is estimated to impact emergency medical care for well over half of the 120 million ED visits in America annually. We greatly appreciate the Senate's past and current efforts on physician payment reform, and wish to encourage your continued vigilance and action in this critical arena.

On behalf of the millions of Medicare patients we serve, we are requesting the Senate's focused efforts to repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula. It is imperative that legislative action take place before the temporary continuance of the physician payment formula expires March 1, 2010.

The current SGR formula threatens the stability and security of the Medicare program and patients' access to needed physician services throughout the nation. Under the current formula, many physicians may be forced to cut services to Medicare and Tricare patients, or stop seeing them altogether.

Medicare recipients could find it increasingly difficult to be treated by their primary care and specialty physicians and may use emergency departments for a much greater percentage of their medical care. This dynamic will severely impact a typical emergency department's ability to deliver high quality emergency medical care, and with the additional demand, will ultimately affect access to emergency care for the critically ill and injured.

We implore you to continue efforts to repeal the SGR such as S.1776 and H.R. 3961, both of which offer viable solutions. In the alternative, given the limited time remaining before these devastating cuts are scheduled to occur, we ask that you consider and support extending a short-term correction to SGR for the coming calendar year.

We look forward to working with you to help improve the quality and access of healthcare for all Americans.

Thank you again for your efforts.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randy Pilgrim".

Sincerely,
Randy Pilgrim, MD, FACEP
Chair