September 12, 2012

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Representative Pelosi:

The undersigned organizations reaffirm our commitment to work with Congress on the shared goal of delivery and payment reform in the Medicare program to promote high-quality, high-value, and better coordinated care to our patients. To reach this goal, adequate and stable investments are necessary so that physicians can modernize their practices to support the coordinated care that will improve health and prevent costly complications, and enable the participation in new payment and delivery models.

As we approach the new year, physicians are faced with the discouraging prospect that our shared goal will be undermined due to the increasing level of uncertainty in the Medicare physician payment system. Looming among the myriad potential barriers to implementing improvements is the two percent Medicare provider payment cut called for under the Budget Control Act's (BCA) sequestration provision. The combination of a sequestration cut and looming Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) payment cut would not only impede improvements to our health care system, it could lead to serious access to care issues for Medicare patients as well as employment reductions in medical practices. **We strongly urge Congress to work diligently during the fall to reach a bi-partisan agreement to pass legislation nullifying the Medicare physician payment cuts called for under the BCA's sequestration provision and the SGR formula.** Sequestration also will result in across-the-board cuts to a wide range of essential programs to ensure high quality and accessible patient care, and we believe that Congress should not abdicate its responsibility to deliberate and make policy decisions on what is important and needs to be funded.

The BCA's Medicare cuts could not occur at a worse time. Medicare physician payments have been nearly frozen for a decade, while the cost of caring for patients has increased by more than 20 percent. Congress still has not revealed a clear plan for addressing the 27 percent cut in 2013 called for by the Medicare SGR formula. While these cuts alone will be devastating to physician practices and patient access to care, physicians are also facing present and future financial penalties if they do not successfully participate in multiple Medicare programs, including the e-prescribing program, the electronic health record meaningful use program, and the Physician Quality Reporting System, as well as the value-based modifier.

Congress has a responsibility to ensure that sufficient funding is available to sustain adequate payment for medical services provided to our nation's seniors and disabled populations under the Medicare program. The status quo is unsustainable, and will do considerable harm to the Medicare program as well as the broader health care delivery system.

We understand that our nation faces significant fiscal challenges; however, these cuts will undermine efforts to achieve broader, long-term reforms to the Medicare program.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association
AMDA – Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Emergency Medicine
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Home Care Physicians
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pain Medicine
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Academy of Urgent Care Medicine
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Mohs Surgery
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
American College of Phlebology
American College of Physicians
American College of Radiation Oncology
American College of Radiology
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Gastroenterological Association
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of General Surgeons
American Society of Neuroradiology
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association
College of American Pathologists
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Heart Rhythm Society
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Spine Intervention Society
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
Medical Group Management Association
National Medical Association
North American Spine Society
Renal Physicians Association
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Vascular Surgery
Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Interventional Radiology
Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging
The Endocrine Society
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Medical Association of the State of Alabama
Alaska State Medical Association
Arizona Medical Association
Arkansas Medical Society
California Medical Association
Colorado Medical Society
Connecticut State Medical Society
Medical Society of Delaware
Medical Society of the District of Columbia
Florida Medical Association Inc
Medical Association of Georgia
Hawaii Medical Association

Idaho Medical Association
Illinois State Medical Society
Indiana State Medical Association
Iowa Medical Society
Kansas Medical Society
Kentucky Medical Association
Louisiana State Medical Society
Maine Medical Association
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Massachusetts Medical Society
Michigan State Medical Society
Minnesota Medical Association
Mississippi State Medical Association
Missouri State Medical Association
Montana Medical Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nevada State Medical Association
New Hampshire Medical Society
Medical Society of New Jersey
New Mexico Medical Society
Medical Society of the State of New York
North Carolina Medical Society
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Oklahoma State Medical Association
Oregon Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Rhode Island Medical Society
South Carolina Medical Association
South Dakota State Medical Association
Tennessee Medical Association
Texas Medical Association
Utah Medical Association
Vermont Medical Society
Medical Society of Virginia
Washington State Medical Association
West Virginia State Medical Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wyoming Medical Society

cc: Members, U.S. House of Representatives