

Grassroots Advocacy Tell Congress: Crippling cuts to Medicare program are inexcusable!

A [letter](#) the AMA sent Dec. 19 to both chambers of Congress calls for immediate action to stop the crippling Medicare pay cut scheduled for Jan. 1 and stabilize the Medicare program.

Congress has yet to work toward stopping the 26.5 percent cut in Medicare physician payments required under the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula. "This continuing game of political chicken is unacceptable and dangerous to the future of the Medicare program," the letter states.

Meanwhile, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has announced it will not delay processing Medicare claims. Medicare carriers will process payments for physician services provided after Dec. 31 under the normal 14-day cycle required by law. That means physicians who care for Medicare patients will see an immediate reduction of 26.5 percent in payment for their services beginning Jan. 1.

"With no sign of action from Congress, physicians must prepare themselves and their patients for an impending Medicare crisis," AMA President Jeremy A. Lazarus, MD, said in a [statement](#). "With a full year to stop this drastic cut, it is absolutely inexcusable that Congress has failed to act, leaving Medicare patients and physicians to deal with the consequences."

While the AMA continues to urge Congress to avert this crisis, physicians should make plans for how they will mitigate disruptions and meet their financial obligations, should the cut take effect Jan. 1.

Physicians who are forced to restrict their involvement with Medicare because it threatens the viability of their practices also should notify their patients promptly so they can explore other options for their health care and medical treatment.

Tell Congress it's time to stop partisan games and address Medicare physician payment. [Email](#) your members of Congress through the AMA Physician Grassroots Network today, or call using the AMA grassroots hotline at (800) 833-6354. Patients also can contact Congress through the AMA's [Patients' Action Network](#).

If you or your patients are interested in helping the AMA better illustrate how Medicare instability is affecting individual Americans, you can send the AMA an [email](#) with your story. Please include your name, specialty and city.

SOURCE: AMA

ICD-10 CODING IMPLEMENTATION

Don't Forget! The ICD-10-related implementation date is now October 1, 2014, as announced in final rule CMS-0040-F issued on August 24, 2012. This final rule is available at http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/Statute_Regulations.html on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website. The switch to the new code set will affect every aspect of how your organization provides care, but with adequate planning and preparation, you can ensure a smooth transition for your practice. Visit the ICD-10 website at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/index.html> for the latest news and resources to help you prepare. *Watch for upcoming announcements from MSD on educational events related to practice preparation for ICD-10.*

SOURCE: MSD

Novitas-Customer Service Wait Time

Novitas Solutions is aware that callers are experiencing excessive wait times when attempting to reach a Customer Service Representative (CSR) due to higher than historical / planned volumes, post JH transition activity, new customers, as well as CMS initiatives such as Therapy Cap. If you believe your office could benefit from Interactive Voice Response (IVR) or call flow training, complete a Request for Education form at www.surveymonkey.com/s/assocrequestforedu.

Source:MSD