

Urgent Action needed!

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

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