

## **21.2% Medicare Physician Payment Cut to be Implemented March 1**

Take Action and Urge Congress to Permanently Repeal the SGR Formula

The United States Congress has failed to approve legislation preventing the implementation of the 21.2 percent cut in Medicare physician payments. As a result of their inability to adequately address this issue in a timely and responsible manner, payments for physician services will be cut 21.2 percent on Monday, March 1.

On February 25, the House of Representatives approved H.R. 4691, legislation that extends numerous expiring federal programs for 30 days. The bill included an extension of current Medicare payment policies through March 28. The Senate attempted on several occasions to approve the legislation last night through a unanimous consent agreement. However, Senator Jim Bunning objected on each attempt based upon his concerns that the bill was not offset. The Senate has adjourned for the weekend, thus ensuring that the 21.2 percent cut will take effect on Monday, March 1.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that they have instructed their contractors to hold all Medicare physician claims for 10 business days, effective Monday. This delay provides Congress additional time to resolve these issues prior to reductions in pay for physicians are realized. At this time, CMS has no plans to extend the enrollment period beyond the current March 17 deadline.

The AOA urges each of you to voice your concerns immediately with your elected officials. The AOA has numerous vehicles by which you can communicate with your Representatives and Senators on this issue.