



AMAdvocate
THE AMA PHYSICIANS' GRASSROOTS NETWORK



[In late December, Congress passed a bill](#) that averted the 21 percent Medicare physician payment cut that was scheduled to take effect Jan. 1 and delayed it until March 1 to provide a window of opportunity for passing a permanent solution to the sustainable growth rate (SGR) problem. The AMA strongly communicated to the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate its opposition to another one- or two-year temporary Band-Aid that produces deeper cuts in future years and grows the cost of a permanent solution. Frankly, Congress must apply the basic principle that when you are in a hole, quit digging and put away the shovel.

[▶ Voting Records](#)
[▶ Capitol Hill Basics](#)

Lawmakers in the House went back to work on Jan. 12 while their counterparts in the Senate return to Washington D.C. on Jan. 19. When the Senate resumes floor action on Jan. 20, it will take up legislation dealing with the federal debt limit extension and other issues. **This will provide a window of opportunity to get Congress to pass a permanent repeal of the SGR.**

We may not ever get another opportunity like this to deal with the SGR. If you haven't weighed in yet on the debate occurring in Congress about what to do about Medicare physician payments, **you need to do so now, before the decision is made for you and legislation is drafted.**

Use the AMA's toll-free grassroots hotline at (800) 833-6354 or [send an e-mail](#).

Remind Sen. Bill Nelson and Sen. George LeMieux that with [the threat of annual cuts](#) (PDF):

1. Seniors grow more concerned about losing access to the physician of their choice—a problem that will only grow as Baby Boomers start to enter the Medicare system.
2. Military families—both active and retired—rely on a stable Medicare payment system to keep their insurance, TRICARE, stable.
3. Resolving the problem now is the fiscally responsible course to take. Relying on past methods of postponing the immediate crisis will only increase the cost of a permanent repeal. Congress can no longer afford to kick the can down the road.

Please contact your senators. [Send an e-mail](#) or call using the AMA's hotline at (800) 833-6354.

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information,
please visit:



<http://www.ama-assn.org/grassroots>



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