



HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATES in Medicine, P.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATES APPLAUDS THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 3961

As the Senate voted to commence the health care reform debate over the weekend, the onus on achieving real reform before the years end has become even more pronounced. Lost in the hyperbole about Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and his quest to obtain his 60 votes, was the actual passage of real reform. On Thursday, November 19, the members of Congress voted 243-183 in favor of the H.R. 3961 legislation. If reform is to occur, the passage of this legislation was mandatory. Fortunately, the commitment to achieving reform has been real and the health care industry and the patients they treat will benefit as a result.

If enacted, the approval of this legislation would halt a proposed 21-percent cut next year in Medicare payments to physicians. As a result, the legislation provides a new solution for the Sustainable Growth Rate (S.G.R.) formula. The legislation would replace the S.G.R. with physician updates based on inflation rather than specified targets. It would also eliminate the accounting debt accumulated by the formula, thus dispensing the main obstacle in preventing the adoption of a realistic formula to determine physician payments under Medicare. The bill will change the Medicare formula for reimbursing physicians by increasing payments by nearly \$20 billion per year over ten years.

"This legislation will help stabilize the Medicare physician reimbursement system," said Paul Berkley, the CEO of Healthcare Associates in Medicine, P.C. "As such, the questions physicians continually battle with regarding their ability to accept Medicare beneficiaries will subside and they will be able to focus more of their attention where it belongs – on the care of the patient." Accordingly, this legislation will appropriately pay for patient evaluation and management services, putting the emphasis on comprehensive and coordinated care. With these benefits in mind, we will continue to support full inclusion of this legislation in any eventual final health care reform bill.

As one of the top health care providers for residents living in the New York metropolitan area, we have closely monitored the ongoing health care reform attempts. While we still have serious questions about H.R. 3962, we believe that the passage of this legislation is an important step in the right direction. This will help us enhance the high quality of care we already provide for our patients. At Healthcare Associates, we are dedicated to providing every patient with the appropriate care and treatment based on their personal condition. This is accomplished through coordination of service and by aggressively representing each patient's personal circumstances whereby their care is our primary concern.

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