

December 13, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
H-232 Capitol Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6501

Dear Speaker Boehner:

On behalf of the American College of Radiology (ACR), representing more than 36,000 diagnostic radiologists, interventional radiologists, radiation oncologists, nuclear medicine physicians and medical physicists, I am pleased to voice support for the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) provisions included in H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011. ACR applauds you and your colleagues for crafting legislation which replaces the scheduled 27.4 percent cut in Medicare physician reimbursement rates attributable to the flawed SGR formula with a 1 percent payment increase in 2012 and 2013. Despite the nation's challenging fiscal situation, House Republicans recognized the detrimental impact such draconian cuts will have on patient access to high quality health care, especially life-saving diagnostic imaging services. While a permanent repeal of the SGR formula proved elusive, we are hopeful that another two years of budget stability grants an additional opportunity for ACR to work with Congress on a new payment system that promotes quality and more adequately reflects the true cost of health care.

ACR is also very pleased that, for the first time in six years, Congress did not pursue cuts to diagnostic imaging services as a way to offset the cost of preventing the anticipated SGR reimbursement reductions. Our membership, however, is deeply disappointed and frustrated that the final House Republican SGR legislation did not include H.R. 3269, the Diagnostic Imaging Services Access Protection Act. Introduced by Representatives Pete Olson (R-TX) and Betty McCollum (D-MN), H.R. 3269 prevents CMS from imposing a 25 percent payment reduction to the professional interpretation of advanced diagnostic imaging services for multiple imaging studies administered to the same patient, by separate interpreting physicians in the same practice setting, on the same day. To date, this budget neutral legislation has generated 130 bipartisan cosponsors, many of which serve on the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees. As H.R. 3630 continues to make its way through the House and Senate, ACR, as well as the hundreds of thousands of patients we care for on a daily basis, urge you to include H.R. 3269 in the final bill.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Cynthia Moran, Assistant Executive Director, American College of Radiology, either by phone, 703-648-8982, or email, cmoran@acr.org.

Sincerely,



John A. Patti, MD, FACR
Chairman, Board of Chancellors

cc: The Honorable Eric Cantor, Majority Leader, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Majority Whip, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Dave Camp, Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce