



# American College of Surgeons

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SENT TO ENTIRE U.S. HOUSE

November 19, 2003

The Honorable Dennis Hastert  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the 65,000 Fellows of the American College of Surgeons, it is with great pleasure that I urge Congress to pass H.R.1 without delay. By supporting this bill, Mr. Speaker, you will make great strides toward ensuring patients' access to surgeons and all physicians.

The College commends the House and Senate conferees for their work on the Prescription Drug and Medicare Modernization Act conference report. The College strongly supports provisions to avert further Medicare payment cuts and to provide positive physician payment updates in 2004 and 2005.

Not only does this legislation halt the upcoming 4.5 percent cut in physician payments, it includes important provisions to lighten the regulatory burden on doctors who participate in Medicare. Specifically, the legislation will better target current Medicare education dollars to provide needed outreach and education to physicians and health care providers on the complexities of Medicare billing.

Without doubt, physicians are the lynchpin of the Medicare program. Passage the Medicare conference agreement is critical to keeping surgeons participating in Medicare, thus ensuring access to quality health care for our nation's elderly and disabled citizens.

Again, I urge you to vote in favor of this landmark legislation. America's seniors and disabled patients deserve accessible and affordable health care. We look forward to swift passage of these reforms.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Russell, MD, FACS  
Executive Director

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