



San Diego County Medical Society

"Physicians United for a Healthy San Diego"

May 15, 2013

Congressman Dave Camp, Chairman
Ways and Means Committee Office
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Camp:

The San Diego County Medical Society (SDCMS), which represents San Diego's more than 7,000 practicing physicians, urges you to include an update to California's Medicare payment localities in the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) reform legislation.

San Diego is the 8th largest city in the United States yet Medicare still designates our county as rural. Due to the fact that Medicare has failed to update the physician payment localities, physicians in San Diego are underpaid by 4% each year, and they have foregone over \$313 million in Medicare payment over the years. This payment policy has created significant access to care problems in San Diego.

SDCMS strongly supports the California Pilot Proposal being forwarded by Congressmen Darrell Issa (R-San Diego) and Sam Farr (D-Santa Cruz/Monterey) and supported by the California Medical Association. The proposal would update the payment regions to Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) as recommended by the Institute of Medicine and MedPAC.

The proposal would hold California's rural counties harmless from cuts for a limited time at no cost to the government, using a California-only funding source. After five years, the localities would revert back to the current locality configuration to avoid cuts to the rural physicians. At that time, Congress can assess the California pilot and reform the geographic payment system as step two in the overall Medicare SGR payment reform effort.

Physicians are vital to the health and economic wellbeing of San Diego and are substantial contributors to the state and federal tax base. We urge you, in the name of San Diego's patients and doctors, to support the California Pilot Proposal as it will help to address the significant access to care problems that Medicare patients are facing in San Diego. Thank you for your interest in this important issue.

Sincerely,



Sherry L. Franklin, MD
President, San Diego County Medical Society

CC: Elizabeth McNeil, Federal Government Relations, CMA