



June 12, 2008

The Honorable Charles Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians, representing 125,000 internal medicine physicians and medical student members, I am writing to thank you for including policies that are important to internists and their patients in the Preserving Access to Medicare Act of 2008.

We are particularly appreciative of the following policies: providing 18 months of positive updates to replace devastating SGR payment cuts; increasing funding for the Medicare medical home demonstration; changing the way CMS determines budget neutrality adjustments so physician work relative value units will no longer be disadvantaged; and developing a methodology for providing targeted increases for primary care services in Physician Scarcity Areas. These policy changes, which are also included in the legislation being considered by the Senate today, would be important steps toward stabilizing Medicare payments to all physicians while addressing inequities in reimbursement for primary care services. It is encouraging that such policies have such broad bipartisan support.

We also look forward to further discussions with you and your staff on other elements of the Preserving Access to Medicare Act of 2008, such as the Value Based Purchasing and e-prescribing policies, to address questions we have about the policies so as to achieve the best possible outcome for internists and their patients.

Thank you for your leadership for improving access to care for Medicare patients. We are committed to continuing to work with you and your Senate colleagues to achieve a bipartisan vote on a legislative outcome to replace the SGR cuts with 18 months of positive updates and improve access to primary care services.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey P. Harris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeffrey Harris, MD, FACP
President