

ACP

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
INTERNAL MEDICINE | *Doctors for Adults*

July 24, 2008

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Baucus:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP) representing 126,000 internal medicine physicians and medical students, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your leadership in the passage and veto override of H.R. 6331. We appreciate your unwavering support for this legislation at a time when physicians across the country were facing harsh, potentially devastating, cuts under Medicare.

Because of your leadership, America's internists will not face payment reductions under Medicare for the next 18 months but instead will see a continuation of current rates this year and a 1.1 % increase in reimbursements in 2009. This increase will create temporary stability for our physicians and also allow them to continue to care for and treat both new and established Medicare patients in their practices.

We also recognize and appreciate your continued support of primary care physicians. As the Senate Finance Committee crafted legislation to prevent the reduction in Medicare payments to doctors, you and your staff were always willing to listen and respond to the views of ACP. We are particularly pleased with the inclusion of language in H.R. 6331 that incorporated and addressed our top priorities for the 110th Congress: improved payments for primary care visits through a change in how HHS applies budget neutrality adjustments, and increased funding for the Medicare Medical Home demonstration project. As you mentioned, these provisions represent a down payment on changes that are needed to advance the role of primary care physicians.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue and your commitment to the veto override of H.R. 6331. The College looks forward to working with you in the future to address a long term solution to the physician payment system under Medicare.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Harris, MD, FACP
President