

PHYSICIAN LEADER SCRIPT FOR CALLING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ABOUT THE SGR

Below is a script for the key physician leaders and key contacts who are going to directly contact and talk to the Member of Congress or their staff. The other physicians leaders can call the office and leave a msg with the person answering the phone using the Grasstops phone message below. You can also send an email through the AMA's website www.fixmedicarenow.org; Click on "Physician" then click on "write Congress."

1. SCRIPT FOR KEY PHYSICIAN LEADERS AND KEY CONTACTS

You may call the district office or use the AMA Grassroots Hotline Number 888 833 6354 , plug in your zip code, and it will automatically connect you to your Representative's Washington, D.C. office.

Hello, this is **NAME**, and I am the **PRESIDENT/OFFICER OF THE XXXX COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND A PHYSICIAN LEADER IN THE CMA.**

I WANT TO TALK TO **CONGRESSMAN/CONGRESSWOMAN NAME** about the Medicare SGR bill that will be on the House floor for a vote this coming Tuesday, March 25.

Can I schedule a time to talk to them or their staff before the Tuesday vote? In-person or via conference call.

MESSAGE FOR THE MEETING:

The CMA and the XXX COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION are supporting the bipartisan, bicameral legislation to repeal and replace the Medicare SGR physician payment system and we are supporting the bipartisan House leadership agreement to fund the SGR bill. We are urging your YES vote. Do you know how you will be voting? If you can let us know if you have any problems before the vote, we would appreciate it. And if the Representative or staff want to discuss it in further detail, please contact me.

From our standpoint, the legislative framework is fiscally responsible, it provides meaningful payment reform and stability in Medicare, it extends the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and ensures access to care for 5 million California Medicare seniors, 1 million military families (through TriCare) and more than 1 million children through CHIP.

Access to Care: We need payment reform in Medicare to improve access to physicians. Patients are experiencing access to care problems in our community. Many physicians in our community are pulling out of Medicare or no longer accepting NEW Medicare patients. There are more than 1,000 new Medicare enrollees every single day in California. Moreover, more than half of California physicians are over the age of 55. If they are not provided some stability, they will retire and the Medicare crisis will grow. (Please provide stories about physician specialty and primary care shortages in your community and any access to care stories.)

Concerns with the Funding Sources: If they raise concerns about this bill not being paid for and increasing the deficit, please tell them that Speaker Boehner (R-OH), Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and Leader Pelosi (D-CA) have negotiated a fair, bipartisan agreement. They believe, as we do, that the cost to repeal the SGR should be \$0. Congress always steps in and stops the SGR cuts so the SGR never takes effect. Therefore, the projected SGR savings to the federal government are phony and the cost to repeal the SGR is \$0. We do not think this bill realistically increases the deficit. The Wall Street Journal, Americans for Tax Reform and other conservative groups are urging Congress to pass the bill as is.

If they raise concerns about the bill increasing premiums on seniors, please tell them that CMA is always concerned when patient cost-sharing is increased because sometimes it can discourage patients from seeking care. However, the premium increases in this bill range from \$22-40/month for very high income senior couples making \$266,000/\$320,000 and above. We don't think these means tested premium increases are too unreasonable and overall, they will help to ensure that ALL seniors have access to a doctor.

If they are concerned that CHIP was only extended 2 years instead of 4 years, you can be supportive of both but say that you are supporting getting something done as soon as possible and this bill may be our only opportunity. Otherwise, CHIP expires in September 2015. Moreover, this deal funds CHIP at the higher levels in the Affordable Care Act.

Bottom Line: The Medicare program needs to be fixed and this bill provides a path to stability for physicians and patients. It is essential and long overdue. Physicians and patients in your district need this reform. We hope you will vote YES next week.

2. SCRIPT FOR OTHER KEY PHYSICIAN LEADERS WHO ARE LEAVING A MESSAGE WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE'S OFFICE AND OUR SENATOR'S OFFICES:

Call your Representatives now! Put the SGR over the finish line!

To make a call from the American Medical Association Grassroots Hotline, dial 800 833 6354 and enter your ZIP code to be automatically connected to your representative in Washington, D.C. Or you can call their district office. Give your name, specialty and practice location, and don't forget to call back to connect to our California Senators. Please tell them you are a physician leader in CMA and your XXX County Medical Association.

Urge your Representative and Senators to:

Please Vote YES on the Medicare SGR legislation.

Please support the Children's Health Insurance Program-CHIP

The bill is fiscally responsible.

This bill will stabilize my medical practice and protect access to care for my patients – seniors, the disabled, military families, and CHIP uninsured children in our community.

IT'S TIME TO FIX MEDICARE NOW and EXTEND CHIP!