

Medicare Patient Empowerment Act

May 22, 2011

Medicare Patient Empowerment Act is Introduced in the Senate

On May 22, Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced the "Medicare Patient Empowerment Act" in the Senate (S. 1042). The bill would establish a Medicare payment option for patients and physicians to freely contract, without penalty, for Medicare fee-for-service physician and practitioner services, while allowing Medicare patients to use their Medicare benefits and allowing physicians to bill the patient for all amounts not covered by Medicare. Physicians and practitioners could continue to elect Medicare participating (PAR) or non-participating (non-PAR) status for other patients they treat. H.R. 1700, the same legislation, was previously introduced in the House by Representative Tom Price, MD (R-GA). MSNJ supports this private contract option as part of Medicare payment reform.

May 12, 2011

MSNJ Advocates for Payment Reform

We reported that MSNJ had joined the Coalition of State Medical and National Specialty Societies in support of the Medicare Patient Empowerment Act, H.R. 1700, a bill allowing patients to: contract privately with their physicians; and, continue to receive the benefit of the Medicare program into which they have paid through payroll deductions. Read the Coalition's [letter](#) to the Energy & Commerce Committee on Medicare payment reform. We joined the AMA in its effort to find co-sponsors for the bill.

May 5, 2011

AMA & Coalition Testify on Medicare Payment Reform

On Thursday, May 5 the AMA and the Coalition of State Medical and National Specialty Societies testified before the Energy & Commerce Committee on Medicare payment reform. Last week we provided AMA's letter to the Committee outlining its three point plan for Medicare payment reform: repealing the SGR; providing a five-year period of statutory payment updates; and engaging in a variety of new payment models. The AMA announced that Representative Price introduced the Medicare Patient Empowerment Act (H.R. 1700) on May 4 and added the private contract concept to its testimony before the Committee.

MSNJ joined the Coalition's letter and appreciates the work of the AMA for comprehensive Medicare payment reform.

May 3, 2011

MEDICARE PATIENT EMPOWERMENT ACT INTRODUCED

On May 3, Representative Tom Price, MD (R-GA) introduced the Medicare Patient Empowerment Act (H.R. 1700). This bill, based on policy advocated by MSNJ and adopted by the AMA House of Delegates, would allow Medicare patients and their physicians to enter into private contracts without penalty to either party. It would enable beneficiaries to use their Medicare benefits to see physicians who do not accept Medicare, as opposed to paying for the entire cost of their care out-of-pocket as required under current law.

MSNJ joins the AMA to thank Dr. Price for his advocacy for the medical profession and assistance to secure co-sponsors for this important legislation.

April 26, 2011

AMA Sends Medicare Payment Reform Recommendations to Congress

On April 26, the AMA sent its [official response](#) to a request from the House Energy & Commerce Committee for recommendations on reforming the Medicare physician payment system. AMA's response was based on the work of its SGR Task Force which is comprised of seven state

medical societies and seven national specialty societies. The AMA's framework for payment reform seeks:

- An immediate repeal of Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula;
- A five-year period of statutorily set payment updates to provide stability and the opportunity for developing and testing new payment and delivery models; and
- A transition period for a number of new payment models.

The Energy & Commerce Committee will conduct a hearing on SGR reform on May 5 during which Dr. Cecil Wilson will present testimony on behalf of the AMA.