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November 16, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I write to inform you of the American College of Osteopathic Internists' (ACOI) support for the "Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act of 2009" (H.R. 3961). This legislation takes important steps to protect and improve access to Medicare services for millions of beneficiaries.

The ACOI represents the nation's osteopathic internists and medical subspecialists, including residents and fellows in those fields, and is dedicated to the advancement of osteopathic internal medicine through excellence in education, advocacy, research and the opportunity for service. Further, the ACOI is committed to assisting its members' efforts to provide the highest level of quality care. Central to the attainment of these goals is adequate reimbursement under the Medicare program.

We applaud your efforts to advance legislation to reform the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula. As you know, physicians are plagued by the uncertainty of the formula and face annually the possibility of Medicare reimbursements not covering the basic cost of providing care to Medicare beneficiaries. Recently, physicians have had to rely on Congress to prevent reductions on an annual basis. As you know, physicians now face a 21.2 percent reduction in 2010 with additional reductions totaling over 40 percent in the next few years. This is simply unsustainable. H.R. 3961, by repealing the SGR formula, takes important steps to repair this broken system. We believe meaningful SGR reform as provided for in H.R. 3961 is essential for protecting and expanding access to care for Medicare beneficiaries. As such, SGR reform needs to remain a core component of efforts to reform the healthcare delivery system.

The "Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act of 2009" (H.R. 3961) is important legislation for both physicians and the patients they serve. To this end, we support H.R. 3961 and look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Clearfield, DO, FACOI
President