

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2010

Contact:

Brian Durand

O: 860-547-1414

C: 203-609-1636



**THE
PHYSICIANS
FOUNDATION**
HELPING **DOCTORS** HELP

DOCTORS AND PATIENTS NEED LONG-TERM MEDICARE SOLUTIONS

National physicians group says Congress must 'fix the problem once and for all'

Boston, Mass. – The Physicians Foundation, a national healthcare organization representing physician interests, today expressed its frustration that Congress missed today's deadline to address a proposed 21 percent Medicare cut.

On Friday, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4213, which among other things would freeze the payment cuts until December 2011. However, the Senate failed to act in time, leaving doctors and their patients in the lurch. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid will hold claims for 10 days beginning today to allow time for the Senate to pass the bill. Congress has voted nine times in eight years to delay the cuts rather than pass a substantive fix to the problem.

“Even if Congress manages to stave off the cuts for another year, they’ll only be kicking the can that much farther down the road,” said Lou Goodman, PhD, President. “Even under current conditions, there is widespread frustration and concern among doctors across the country. We need a permanent fix for this problem – we need Congress to save Medicare. If these massive cuts become a reality, the increase in costs will make it even harder for doctors to do the thing they care about most: spending time helping their patients.”

43 million Americans currently receive Medicare coverage. In 2008, a landmark national survey of physicians commissioned by The Physicians Foundation found that 82 percent of primary care doctors nationwide believed their practices would be “unsustainable” if proposed cuts to Medicare payments were made. The Physicians Foundation believes that the new Medicare cuts will only exacerbate problems of access and doctor shortages across the country.

“At a time when our country is gearing up to implement massive reforms to our healthcare system, it’s very distressing that Medicare remains very much in limbo,” continued Goodman. “After all, what good can this new legislation hope to do for the newly insured if access is

reduced because of severe doctor shortages? In the months ahead, The Physicians Foundation will work to better understand and publicize the effects that health system reform is having on doctors and their patients, specifically in regard to workforce shortages.”

The Physicians Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that seeks to advance the work of practicing physicians and to improve the quality of healthcare for all Americans. The Foundation is unique in its commitment to working with physicians nationwide to create a more efficient and equitable healthcare system. It pursues its mission through a variety of activities including grantmaking, research and policy studies. Since 2005, The Foundation has awarded numerous multi-year grants. Additional information about The Physicians Foundation is available online at www.physiciansfoundation.org.

###