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November 26, 2007

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
284 Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C., 20510-4304

Dear Sen. Hutchison,

On behalf of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians and the 5,500 family physicians, residents and medical students in the state of Texas, I am writing to urge you to intervene and stop the Medicare payment cuts scheduled for the next two years.

Unless Congress acts soon, physicians will face a payment cut of 10.1 percent in 2008 and an additional 5-percent cut in 2009. While the cost of running a medical practice has increased, Medicare payments have remained flat and have not kept pace with the cost of providing care for Medicare patients.

If these arbitrary Medicare cuts occur, they will have a dramatic negative impact on the ability of Texas' family physicians to not only care for their Medicare patients, but all of their patients. Most private managed care plans base their payment on a percentage of Medicare, so any decrease in Medicare payment will automatically decrease payment on the commercial side as well.

Texas' family physicians need a more predictable practice environment with a stable annual payment update that reflects the cost of providing care to patients. We implore you, for the sake of our patients, to stop the proposed Medicare payment cuts and provide a two-year positive update to the Medicare physician payment rate.

We pledge our full support and cooperation to address this urgent matter. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tom Banning, CEO/EVP of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians, at (512) 329-8666.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda M. Siy, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda Siy, M.D.
President
Texas Academy of Family Physicians