



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDICARE MELTDOWN LOOMING AS STEEP MEDICARE CUT BEGINS
AMA President Unveils Multi-Million Dollar Ad Campaign, New Physician Survey

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Senate’s failure to act before this week’s 21 percent Medicare physician payment cut has put seniors’ health care at grave risk. A new American Medical Association (AMA) [physician survey](#) shows that many physicians are already limiting the number of Medicare patients they treat. The AMA today launched a multi-million dollar national [advertising campaign](#), with ads on TV and radio and in newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

“The Senate has turned its back on our nation’s seniors and the physicians who care for them by leaving for vacation and failing to stop a 21 percent Medicare cut before their self-imposed June 1 deadline,” said AMA President J. James Rohack, M.D. “Today, the AMA is unveiling a new multi-million dollar ad campaign encouraging the public to contact their Senators and tell them to get back to work and fix Medicare now.”

The 21 percent cut also hurts our nation’s military families, as TRICARE rates are tied to Medicare. “It is sad and ironic that Senators raced home to celebrate Memorial Day without first voting to preserve health care for active duty military families,” Dr. Rohack said.

Yesterday, the AMA received a call from Joan, a retired nurse, who was looking for a Maryland physician for her 72 year-old sister and could not find one who took Medicare. Both physician offices she called said that as of this June 1 they were no longer accepting new Medicare patients --- a real life example of how decisions made in Washington hurt real people.

Our new online survey of 9,000 physicians who care for Medicare patients confirms that seniors are already being hurt by Congress’ mismanagement of the Medicare program. About one in five physicians (17%) say they have already been forced to limit the number of Medicare patients in their practice. Nearly one-third of primary care physicians (31%) have already been forced to take that action. The top two reasons physicians gave for these actions were the ongoing threat of future cuts and the fact that Medicare payment rates were already too low.

“Make no mistake: Physicians want to care for seniors and military families, but the chronic instability caused by the threat of future payment cuts has already taken its toll – and a 21 percent cut will make matters much worse,” Dr. Rohack said.

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“This is the third time this year that Congress has allowed a Medicare deadline to expire without action,” Dr. Rohack said. “Each time Congress delays fixing the Medicare physician payment cut makes the problem worse and the price tag higher for the American taxpayer. Enough is enough. The Senate needs to fix the Medicare physician payment system for America’s seniors once and for all.”

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Editor’s Note: An electronic press kit regarding today’s announcement is available at: www.ama-assn.org/go/fixmedicarenow

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About the American Medical Association (AMA)

The American Medical Association helps doctors help patients by uniting physicians nationwide to work on the most important professional, public health and health policy issues. The nation’s largest physician organization plays a leading role in shaping the future of medicine. For more information on the AMA, please visit www.ama-assn.org. Follow AMA on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/AmerMedicalAssn>.