



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 20, 2009

Maine Medical Association
Frank O. Stred Building
30 Association Drive
P.O. Box 190
Manchester, Maine 04351

Dear Maine Medical Association Members,

Thank you for your interest in health care reform, and even more importantly, for the critical work you do to provide quality care to Mainers.

As you know, we are on the verge of achieving landmark health reform. H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, passed the House with my support on November 7. This historic health reform legislation will lower the cost of health care for those who are already insured, improve the quality of care in this country, and provide guaranteed access to a choice of affordable coverage for every American family.

We know that lasting health reform cannot be achieved unless we address the needs of our country's physicians and enable them to serve their Medicare patients. That is why I was proud to vote in favor of H.R. 3961, the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act of 2009, which passed the House on November 19.

This critical legislation will permanently reform the way Medicare pays physicians by repealing the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula that would otherwise result in a 21 percent fee reduction scheduled for January 2010. This bill will replace the SGR with a stable system that ends the cycle of threats of ever-larger fee cuts followed by short-term patches. Permanent Medicare physician payment reform will guarantee that Medicare beneficiaries can continue to have access to the doctor of their choice, an essential cornerstone of care for our seniors.

I firmly believe that there is nothing we can do for Maine and this country that is more important than fixing our health care system, and passing H.R. 3961 and H.R. 3962 were big steps in doing that. This legislation is now awaiting further action in the Senate, and I will work to ensure that we continue to protect doctor-patient access as these bills continue to move through the legislative process.

I sincerely hope my office can serve as a resource for you during this time. If you have any questions or concerns about how this bill would affect the work that you do, or if you need any additional information that you can share with your colleagues or patients, please don't hesitate to contact Jennifer Taylor in my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 225-6116.

Again, thank you again for your dedicated service to Maine seniors. I hope to see you in Maine soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chellie', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress