



Working Together for an Affordable Future

PRESS RELEASE

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NCHC Enlists Consumer Groups, Businesses and Insurers in Push for 2013 SGR Reform

WASHINGTON, DC—The National Coalition on Health Care (NCHC), joined by leading consumer and disease organizations, medical societies, business organizations, and pension funds, urged a bipartisan effort to repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) payment formula and transition toward value-based reimbursement in Medicare in a [letter](#) sent to Congressional chairmen Friday.

“No longer is this just a physicians’ issue. Payment approaches based on value, not volume, are essential to affordability for consumers, payers and taxpayers,” said NCHC President and CEO John Rother. The letter was addressed to Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT), House Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI) and House Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI).

Since its enactment in 1997, the SGR has threatened to impose across-the-board cuts to reimbursement for physicians and other providers paid through Medicare the physician fee schedule. Congress has responded with a series of temporary measures to avert the cuts. However, this year, a newly reduced estimate of the budgetary impact of a permanent repeal has sparked renewed interest in a longer-term solution.

The letter, released today, backs a permanent repeal of the SGR, but it also urges broader reforms to addressing the cost and quality challenges facing America’s health system.

“Today’s physicians are caught between innovative approaches to care that help us spend health care dollars more wisely and the persistence of the old volume-based approaches that rack up bills without necessarily serving the best interests of patients. If Congress acts this year, Medicare can help accelerate a system-wide transition toward better care at lower costs,” said Dr. Jack Lewin, internal medicine physician and Chair of the NCHC Board of Directors.

The initial signatories were as follows:

- National Coalition on Health Care
- AARP
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American College of Cardiology
- American College of Physicians

- American Osteopathic Association
- American Society of Neurorehabilitation
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association
- Blue Shield of California
- California Public Employees Retirement System
- Families USA
- Healthcare Leadership Council
- Kentucky Teachers Retirement System
- National Business Coalition on Health
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society
- National Physicians Alliance
- National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA)
- Ohio Public Employees Retirement System
- Pacific Business Group on Health
- Public Sector HealthCare Roundtable
- SCAN Health Plan
- School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
- State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio
- United Spinal Association

To read the full text of the letter, click [here](#).

In November 2008, NCHC released its Plan for Health and Fiscal Policy, enumerating seven key strategies to improve America’s health system including paying providers for value, not volume. To read the plan, entitled [Curbing Costs, Improving Care: The Path to an Affordable Health Care Future](#), click [here](#).

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The National Coalition on Health Care, the oldest and most diverse group working to achieve comprehensive health system reform, is a 501(c)(3) organization representing more than 80 participating organizations, including medical societies, businesses, unions, health care providers, faith-based associations, pension and health funds, insurers and groups representing consumers, patients women , minorities and persons with disabilities. Member organizations collectively represent – as employees, members, or congregants – over 100 million Americans.

Some members of the National Coalition Health Care (NCHC) do not, or cannot, take positions either on specific legislation, strategies or on any policies outside their respective mission areas. However, all that can, do endorse broad policy positions in support of comprehensive health system change.