April 13, 2009

The Honorable John M. Spratt
Chairman, House Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt:

The undersigned organizations urge you to support inclusion in the final Congressional Budget Resolution of a provision that facilitates replacement of the flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula with a new Medicare physician payment system. Section 314 of the House-passed Budget Resolution accomplishes this priority. It is also an important element of broader health system reform that promises to improve incentives for high quality care and for the management of chronic conditions that are responsible for a high proportion of costs for Medicare and privately insured patients. We are committed to working with the authorizing committees to design a new Medicare physician payment system that promotes delivery reforms that will help bend the spending curve for Medicare and other populations.

As you know, Congress and the physician and allied health community now confront a 21 percent payment cut on January 1, 2010, and cuts for the next several years thereafter totaling 40 percent. Section 314 of the House Budget Resolution clears a pathway to permanent reform of the Medicare physician payment system.

As a profession, medicine and allied health professionals are committed to increased efficiency and high-quality care for all our patients. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and we will continue to work with you and all members of Congress to improve Medicare and the broader health care delivery system. We strongly urge that the House-passed Section 314 be retained in the final Congressional Budget Resolution.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Home Care Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology Professional Association
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants

American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Cardiology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Mohs Surgery
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Radiation Oncology
American College of Radiology
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association
American Medical Association
American Medical Group Association
American Optometric Association
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
American Osteopathic Association
American Podiatric Medical Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Rhinologic Society
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Breast Surgeons
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American Thoracic Society
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association
Association of American Medical Colleges
Child Neurology Society

College of American Pathologists
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Emergency Department Practice Management Association
Heart Rhythm Society
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
Medical Group Management Association
National Association of Social Workers
North American Spine Society
Renal Physicians Association
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Vascular Surgery
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Interventional Radiology
The Endocrine Society
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons