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November 17, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H232 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable George Miller, Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Waxman, Chairman Rangel and Chairman Miller:

The Medicare Rights Center wishes to express its support for HR. 3961, the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act of 2009, which would enact a long overdue reform of the flawed Medicare physician payment formula and avert looming payment cuts to the doctors that millions of older adults and people with disabilities rely on for their care. Stable access to health care for people with Medicare cannot be maintained under a payment formula that requires year after year of payment cuts, including a drastic 21.5 percent cut scheduled to take effect in 2010.

Congress has long recognized the Sustainable Growth Rate is a poor method for establishing Medicare payment rates for doctors; in each of the last seven years it has voted to override the cuts mandated under the formula. HR. 3961 would provide a payment update for doctors in 2009 to account for medical inflation and revise the payment system to head off cuts in subsequent years required by the current formula. This will give Congress a new budgetary baseline to establish a payment system that maintains access and encourages the delivery of high-quality care. Another temporary band-aid to avoid next year's cuts does not deliver the stability that both people with Medicare and health reform efforts need. Permanent repeal of this flawed payment formula is the far-sighted and fiscally responsible course of action and would reinforce the delivery system reforms in pending health care legislation that improve reimbursement for primary care doctors and reward delivery of high-quality, coordinated care.

Passage of HR. 3961 is crucial to ensuring people with Medicare can maintain relationships with the doctors who treat them. The Medicare Rights Center is ready to work with you to ensure all members of Congress understand the importance of this legislation to the older adults and people with disabilities in their home states.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Baker".

Joe Baker
President