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October 19, 2009

The Honorable Senator Debbie Stabenow
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

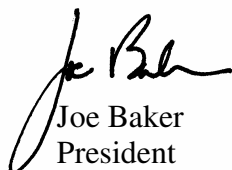
Dear Senator Stabenow,

The Medicare Rights Center wishes to express its gratitude for the introduction of S. 1776, which would enact a long overdue repeal 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. S. 1776 would substitute zero updates for the next ten years for cuts now required by the formula, giving 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 S. 1776 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 senators understand the importance of this legislation to the older adults and people with disabilities in their home states.

Sincerely,



Joe Baker
President