



For Immediate Release

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**NEW AMA ADS BLAST SENATE INACTION ON
MEDICARE CUTS THAT BEGIN TODAY**

Senate Must Act Immediately After Holiday Recess to Preserve Seniors' Access to Care

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Reflecting physicians' frustration with a group of senators that blocked action last week on legislation that would stop harsh Medicare physician payment cuts, the AMA began airing new TV and radio ads urging opponents of H.R. 6331 to put patients' access to care before insurance profits. The ads will run through this week's congressional recess, initially in Mississippi, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming. The ads can be viewed online at www.ama-assn.org/go/medicareads.

“Congress had six months to effectively address harsh Medicare cuts that will harm seniors' access to care,” said AMA President Nancy Nielsen, M.D. “Despite broad bipartisan support in the House of Representatives for legislation to stop the Medicare cuts, action was stymied by 39 senators.”

Because the Senate failed to act, this year's Medicare cut of 10.6 percent will begin today – and a full 60 percent of physicians say this cut will force them to limit the number of new Medicare patients they can treat. Over 18 months the cuts will total more than 15 percent, while medical practice costs continue to increase. The AMA is asking the Senate to make good on bipartisan support for legislative action that would replace Medicare physician payment cuts with updates that better reflect increasing medical practice costs. Last week the House passed the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (H.R. 6331) by an overwhelming vote of 355 to 59.

The new radio and television ads open with a reference to Independence Day then say: “there's no celebrating for the millions of Medicare patients – seniors, the disabled and military families – who will lose their access to health care. A group of U.S. senators voted to protect the powerful insurance companies' huge profits at the expense of Medicare patients' access to doctors.”

“The AMA is activating a full-court press – both advertising and grassroots – in the states during the Independence Day recess,” said Dr. Nielsen. “Over the month of June, more than 41,000 calls by patients and physicians have been made to Congress urging action through the AMA's grassroots hotline alone. Physicians and patients will be holding their senators' feet to the fire.”

“Our Patients Action Network is open now to anyone who wants to voice their concern about Medicare cuts at www.PatientsActionNetwork.org or by calling 888-434-6200,” said Dr. Nielsen. “It’s crucial that Congress act – and that they know America’s patients will not stand idly by as access to care for seniors, the disabled and military families is put at risk.”

“It boils down to this – insurance company profits or patients and the physicians who care for them,” said Dr. Nielsen. “America’s physicians urge senators who voted against action to use this holiday recess to review the facts about H.R. 6331 and then take immediate action upon their return to Washington.”

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About the American Medical Association

The American Medical Association helps doctors help patients by uniting physicians nationwide to work on the most important professional and public health issues. Working together, the AMA's quarter of a million physician and medical student members are playing an active role in shaping the future of medicine. For more information on the AMA, please visit www.ama-assn.org.