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Doctor's group joins national petition drive to save Medicare

INDIANAPOLIS (April 6, 2010) – The Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA) is participating in a nationwide petition drive to collect one million signatures urging Congress to save Medicare by fixing a faulty payment formula.

In March, Congress delayed a 21.2 percent cut to physicians who see Medicare patients, but it is now scheduled to take effect April 14. After short-term fixes to this problem every year for 10 years, the ISMA wants a permanent solution. Even Congress agrees the payment formula is broken and should be repealed.

“The U.S. Senate left for spring recess without addressing Medicare,” said ISMA President Frederick Ridge, M.D. “Congress’ constant toying on this issue and the inability to solve it threatens access to care for all our seniors and military families.”

The ISMA joins several other states in urging people to add their names to the Medicare Petition Campaign before Congress reconvenes April 12. The online petition asks Congress to fix Medicare so patients can choose their doctors and their doctors can stay in the program. Find it at www.ipetitions.com/petition/meltdown.

Dr. Ridge noted, “We’re asking Congress for a rational Medicare physician payment formula that keeps up automatically with the cost of running a practice. As physicians, we want to continue taking care of Medicare patients, and we can do that if Congress focuses on correcting this issue.”

The ISMA, formed in 1849, has more than 8,000 members statewide. The organization works in public, private and governmental sectors to promote sound health care policies and advance continuing medical education for doctors.