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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 12, 2008

CONGRESS MUST OVERRIDE PRESIDENT'S VETO OF HR 6331

Statement by Bechara Choucair, M.D. – representing the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians

"Family physicians in Illinois and across this nation are grateful to both Sen. Richard Durbin and Sen. Barack Obama for voting "yes" on HR 6331 on June 26 and again on July 9. We appreciate the personal efforts of Sen. Durbin throughout this process. I cannot understate the importance of blocking this 10.6 percent cut in Medicare physician payment rates.

"Both houses of Congress must stand up for Medicare patients and the doctors who care for them – and override President Bush's veto.

"When Medicare cuts their rates – many physicians are forced to make tough decisions to keep their practices afloat. If Medicare doesn't fix the fundamental problems with the payment structure, many physicians will get out of Medicare all together. Tomorrow's physicians may never accept Medicare, leaving a drastic gap between physician supply and patient needs.

"Without question, the united voices of dedicated physicians nationwide led to this important, but temporary, reprieve. But physicians can't afford to subsidize Medicare through the failed sustainable growth rate formula any longer.

"The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians urges Congress and CMS to reconstruct the entire Medicare payment process. Medicare must properly compensate the physicians who provide the complex and compassionate care that our seniors need and deserve."

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Dr. Choucair is a family physician and assistant professor at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine department of family medicine.

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Link to Video News Release about Medicare: http://www.iafp.com/PR/ and click on "Academy in Action" video for Medicare

The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians represents more than 4,000 family physicians, family medicine residents and medical students dedicated to excellence in family medicine and the patients they serve. Visit www.iafp.com for more information.