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Media Contact: Ginnie Flynn
630-263-4613 cell
630-427-8004 direct
gflynn@iafp.com

ILLINOIS ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS: MEDICARE SPARED FOR NOW – TIME TO FIX A BROKEN PROGRAM

Statement attributable to Steven D. Knight, MD – President, Illinois Academy of Family Physicians

”Family physicians are relieved by the U.S. Senate’s action today which stops the 10.6 percent cut in Medicare physician reimbursement rates. Without question, the united voices of dedicated physicians here in Illinois and across the nation led to this important, but temporary, reprieve. We now strongly urge Congress and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to use this time to restructure the Medicare payment system.

“We are grateful to both Sen. Dick Durbin and Sen. Barack Obama for voting in favor of HR 6331 on June 26 and again on July 9. We appreciate the personal efforts of Sen. Durbin with comments in support of HR 6331 on the Senate floor today.

“When Medicare cuts their rates – many physicians across the country are forced into tough decisions to keep their practices viable. Only the largest providers have enough volume to absorb such a pay-cut and continue to see Medicare patients. Many private practice doctors won’t be able to accept new Medicare patients and may not be able to take Medicare at all. If Medicare doesn’t fix the fundamental problems with the payment structure, many physicians will get out of Medicare all together. Tomorrow’s new physicians may never accept Medicare, leaving a drastic gap between physician supply and patient need.

“Physician practices can’t afford to continue to provide such a volume of medical care while being paid less than the cost of providing that care. Our seniors need more physician visits and often require extensive physician and staff time to properly manage their conditions.

“The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians urges Congress to follow the recommendations of Medicare providers and MedPAC. We must come together and reconstruct the entire Medicare payment process. Medicare must reflect the cost of providing care, and accurately compensate the physicians who provide the complex and compassionate care that our seniors need and deserve.”

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EDITOR'S NOTE:
Illinois family physicians available for interviews:

Steven Knight, MD – Harrisburg
Kelly Carroll, MD – Moline
Ellen S. Brull, MD – Niles
James Cunnar, MD – Naperville
Carrie Nelson, MD – Aurora
Tom Cornwell, MD – DuPage County

Learn more about these family physicians on http://www.iafp.com/about/officers.htm

More helpful background on www.iafp.com

- Link to Video News Release about Medicare: http://www.iafp.com/PR/ and click on "Academy in Action" video for Medicare
- Link to Audio files about how Medicare cuts can effect specific communities of Harrisburg from Steven D. Knight, MD at http://www.iafp.com/pdfs/sknightmedicare.mp3, Gibson City from David J. Hagan, MD at http://www.iafp.com/pdfs/dhagan.mp3 and Decatur from Kathleen J. Miller, MD at http://www.iafp.com/pdfs/Kmillermedicare.mp3

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.