

ROBERT MENENDEZ
NEW JERSEY

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FINANCE
FOREIGN RELATIONS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3005

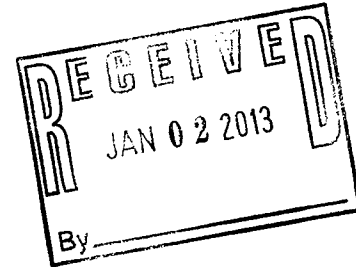
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December 14, 2012

Mr. Lawrence Downs
CEO and General Counsel
Medical Society of New Jersey
2 Princess Rd
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-2320



Dear Mr. Downs:

Thank you for contacting me to express your views on the Medicare sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula. Your opinion is very important to me and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to you on this vital issue.

You will be pleased to know that the President signed the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act (P.L. 112-96) into law on February 22, 2012. This law extends current physician payments through December 31, 2012. This ten month extension ensures that seniors have continued access to their physicians through the end of the year.

While I supported this bill, I strongly believe that we must end the practice of enacting short-term 'band-aid' solutions that fail to provide stability for our doctors and seniors. I agree that there should be a permanent fix in the SGR formula. That is why, in 2009, I voted in favor of bringing the Medicare Physician Fairness Act before the Senate for a full debate and final vote. As you know, under this legislation the SGR would have been completely eliminated from the formula, meaning that Medicare payment rates would be frozen at their current level instead of being reduced. Passing this legislation would also have let us establish a new payment formula based on quality, not volume of services. Unfortunately, the motion to consider this bill in the Senate failed. Please be assured I will continue to support a more permanent solution to the SGR formula.

I appreciate you taking the time to express your thoughts regarding this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance. I also invite you to visit my website (<http://menendez.senate.gov>) to learn more about how I am standing up for New Jersey families in the United States Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Robert Menendez'.

ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator