

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2013
No. HL-03

CONTACT: (202) 225-3943

Chairman Brady Announces Hearing on Developing a Viable Medicare Physician Payment Policy

House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX) today announced that the Subcommittee on Health will hold a hearing examining options for repealing the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula and reforming the Medicare physician payment system to reward quality and value. Determining the details of such a system requires close collaboration with physicians and other stakeholders. The Subcommittee will hear from organizations representing those at the forefront of patient care to inform the development of a viable, enduring reform policy that results in high-quality beneficiary care. **The hearing will take place on Tuesday, May 7, 2013, in 1100 Longworth House Office Building, beginning at 10:00 A.M.**

In view of the limited time available to hear the witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

BACKGROUND:

Medicare currently reimburses the great majority of physicians on a fee-for-service (FFS) basis. While the physician fee schedule takes into account the work, time, and other costs that go into furnishing each service, it does not account for the quality and efficiency of the care provided. Further, the mechanism used to annually update fee schedule payments—the SGR formula, which limits spending growth to growth in the economy—does not recognize value or quality. There is broad acknowledgement of the shortcomings of the current payment system, including the disruptive role of the SGR and the need to incentivize high-quality, outcome-oriented care.

The Subcommittee held three hearings on improving the Medicare physician payment system in the 112th Congress. These hearings provided important information on private payer efforts to reward high quality, efficient care and physician organization programs to drive quality improvement and facilitate participation in new payment models. This information provided a

framework for which a Medicare physician payment reform can be constructed. A dialogue with physician and other stakeholder organizations has continued in the 113th Congress, with the Subcommittee receiving constructive input. On-going engagement is needed to develop a viable replacement payment policy.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Brady stated, **“Reforming Medicare and eliminating the unworkable SGR formula is necessary to ensure our seniors have access to a strong Medicare program. This year we have an opportunity to repeal the SGR, provide predictability for physicians and ensure seniors can see their local doctors. While the timing is ripe for action, we need to be sure we get the policy right. My hope is that we can put the days of kicking the SGR can down the road behind us. This hearing will enable the Subcommittee to hear from stakeholders with experience and ideas on how to craft a policy that is fair, reliable and fiscally responsible.”**

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

The hearing will focus on physician and other stakeholder input on how to best reform the Medicare physician payment system.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select “Hearings.” Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, “Click here to provide a submission for the record.” Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. ATTACH your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, **by the close of business on Tuesday, May 21, 2013**. Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-1721 or (202) 225-3625.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word format and **MUST NOT** exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.

2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/>.