We Must Repeal the SGR, This Year!

Please Help Us by Participating in ACOG’s SGR Repeal Campaign

We’ve been talking about, and working for, repeal of the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate formula for close to a decade. Every year, Medicare physician payments are targeted for double digit cuts. Every year, we put enormous resources into stopping the cut and changing the formula for good. Every year, Congress has delayed the cut and punted a solution for another year.

We’re all tired of this pointless game. It affects all ob-gyns, and only keeps us treading water. It’s time to do something about it, this election year.

I’m calling on each of you, every member of ACOG, to join my Repeal the SGR Campaign. This campaign focuses on only one short term goal: Passing an SGR repeal bill in 2010.

There’s nearly unanimous agreement in the U.S. Congress and the White House that the SGR needs to go away. The House passed an SGR bill in October, with only one Republican, our very own Michael Burgess, MD, FACOG, R-TX, voting for the bill. With nearly unanimous agreement in both houses, what’s standing in the way? Cost. Yes, it’s going to be expensive, but Congress got us into this mess and Congress has to get us out. There’s just no other way.

The House and Senate Leaders have pledged, pledged!, that they’ll bring an SGR bill to the floor in the next two months. I say let’s make this vote count! Let’s hold each and every Member of Congress accountable for his or her vote, and take no prisoners in the process!

ACOG is devoting our full advocacy resources to winning SGR repeal. Ob-GynPAC, which I chair, is aiming all its political contributions to win votes on SGR repeal. We’re working closely with the AMA, the Surgical Coalition, and the Federation of Medicine, to win repeal. And I’m asking each of you to do everything YOU can to insist that your Member of Congress and Senators vote YES on SGR repeal.
Here are the first three actions I’d like you to do today:

1. **Contribute to Ob-GynPAC.** This fight isn’t about legislative arguments, it’s about politics. Every Member of Congress needs to know that we’re serious and we’ll hold people accountable in the 2010 elections.

2. **Write or call your U.S. Representative and your two U.S. Senators** with a very simple message: Repeal the Medicare SGR this year. No more kicking the can down the road.

3. **Discuss this issue at your state and county medical meetings.** Organize a sign on letter from as many local physicians as possible to your US Congressional Delegation.

There’ll be more I’ll ask you do to, for sure, but start with these simple steps right now. The nearly 300 ob-gyns coming to ACOG’s Congressional Leadership Conference will enforce your work, meeting with more than 400 Members of Congress at the beginning of March with that simple Repeal the SGR message. Let’s roll up our sleeves, work together, and get this job done!

---

**Health Care Reform Update**

**Democratic Leaders Scramble to Reach Consensus Amid Public Discontent, Loss of Senate Seat**

Last week, Congressional Democratic Leaders met with President Obama, who also addressed the party ranks on Capitol Hill, in a final effort to reach consensus on the Senate and House health reform bills.

For a summary of the major differences in the two bills, click on our side-by-side comparison chart of Senate bill H.R. 3590 and the House bill, H.R. 3962.

Read how abortion policy differs in the two bills here.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) want to get a final bill to the President, a task made far more difficult by the loss of the Massachusetts Senate seat of the late Ted Kennedy (D), a seat once considered a shoo-in for any Democratic candidate. Republican Scott Brown’s victory eliminates the Democrats’ filibuster-proof 60th vote on health care.

**ACOG Continues to Press for Women’s Health Priorities**

ACOG President Gerald F. Joseph, Jr., MD, issued ACOG’s conference priorities to House and Senate Leaders in late December, providing a detailed blueprint of major women’s health provisions needed in any final bill. Click on Dr. Joseph’s letter here, for ACOG recommendations on maternity coverage, insurance reforms, ob-gyn ultrasound, a woman’s medical home, public funding for abortions, quality performance measures, reimbursement for certified nurse-midwives, funding for comprehensive sexuality education, and more.
1. Join ACOG’s SGR Repeal Campaign!

Physicians Face 21.5% Medicare Payment on March 1

Congress has less than two months to pass a permanent fix to the Medicare physician payment formula, before a 21.5% Medicare physician payment cut originally scheduled for January 1 takes effect on March 1. Senate Majority Leader Reid has agreed to address permanent payment reform this month.

The issue affects the 30,000 ob-gyns who participate in Medicare, as well as those who do not see Medicare patients, since private insurers often adopt Medicare rates.

Join ACOG Members Lobbying Congress in SGR Repeal Campaign: January 22 Registration Deadline

ACOG is pushing hard for permanent physician payment reform. Congress must repeal the SGR and put Medicare physician payment on a sound footing.

At ACOG’s Annual Congressional Leadership Conference, The President’s Conference, on March 2, nearly 300 ACOG Fellows and Junior Fellows will meet with their Members of Congress, to repeal the SGR. Want to participate? Only a few spots remain. Click here for more CLC details, and here to register by January 22.

Join Ob-GynPAC’s 2010 SGR Repeal Campaign

Can’t come to Washington? Join Ob-GynPAC’s 2010 SGR Repeal Campaign. Every one of us has a huge stake in SGR repeal, and the support of all ob-gyns is critical. Supporting is easy. Just fill out the form attached on the last page, and fax or mail to Ob-GynPAC.

Send Your Message to Congress

Call or write your U.S. Representative and your two U.S. Senators with a very simple message: Repeal the Medicare SGR this year. Contact legislators through the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121, or send an email via their websites at www.house.gov or www.senate.gov.

2. Reminder: Medicare Physician Participation Decisions due January 31

Every year at this time, all physicians have the opportunity to review their participation in the Medicare program. Physicians wishing to change their Medicare participation or non-participation status for 2010 have until January 31, 2010. Participation decisions are effective January 1 and binding for the entire year.

Click here for information on what Medicare participation means and your options.
FDA Announces New Research Program on Prescription Drugs and Pregnancy

A new research program called the Medication Exposure in Pregnancy Risk Evaluation Program (MEPREP) will fund research on the effects of prescription medications used during pregnancy. This effort is a collaboration between the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and researchers at the HMO Research Network Center for Education and Research in Therapeutics, Kaiser Permanente’s multiple research centers, and Vanderbilt University.

An estimated two-thirds of pregnant women take a prescription medication, but there are very few clinical trials that test the safety of medications in pregnancy, due to concerns about maternal-fetal health. To overcome the challenges presented by the lack of clinical trial data, the research program will link and evaluate health care information for mothers and their babies in each of the participating research sites. Collectively, the 11 participating sites have health care information for about 1 million births from 2001 to 2007.

“This program is a great example of FDA and the private sector working together to improve the health of pregnant women and their children,” said Margaret Hamburg, MD, Commissioner of Food and Drugs. “These data will guide regulatory policy and influence medical practice.” ACOG has recommended the collection of this data for many years. Click here for more information on the program.

We Want YOU in Public Office.

Ever thought about running for city council, the school board, or higher office? Interested in raising your political profile, or working on a campaign? Then come to ACOG’s Inaugural Candidate Classroom, held in Washington, DC, on Saturday, February 27, the day before ACOG’s 2010 Congressional Leadership Conference. Hear from political experts on how to build a campaign, raise money and use the media. This conference offers political newcomers and seasoned vets alike the tools needed to run. Check out the preliminary agenda. Register by today!

*** January Deadlines

January 22 – Registrations due for ACOG’s 2010 Annual Congressional Leadership Conference, and ACOG’s Inaugural Candidate Classroom.

January 31 – Deadline for Medicare Physician Participation decisions.
Ob-GynPAC's 2010 SGR Repeal Campaign

In February or March, Congress will vote on a permanent repeal of the Medicare physician payment formula, the SGR. We absolutely have to win this vote this year. The SGR is the problem we've been dealing with for far too long, today facing us with a 21% payment cut. Nearly 90% of all US ob-gyns participate in the Medicare program, and even if you don't, your private insurance rates are affected by Medicare, too.

Every one of us has a huge stake in this vote and that's why we need every ACOG member to contribute to Ob-GynPAC today. We'll use every dollar you contribute to help win an SGR repeal vote, and put physician payment on secure footing for the future. Your support is crucial to our success on this vote.

Take a minute of your time, right now, to fill out the form below and send it to Ob-GynPAC, or mail the form in with your personal check. This is one of the most important, most effective, and easiest ways YOU can make a difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FULL NAME</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS</td>
<td>PHONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E-mail is used for confirmation receipt)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYER*</td>
<td>OCCUPATION*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal checks and credit cards ONLY.
Business and Corporate checks and credit cards not allowed under Federal law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$1,000</th>
<th>$500</th>
<th>$250</th>
<th>Other Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Here's my PERSONAL CHECK payable to OB-GYNPAC

Bill my PERSONAL CREDIT CARD: Visa MasterCard American Express

Credit Card Number Expiration Date

Name as it appears on Card Signature

Contributions to Ob-GynPAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions are voluntary and all members of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have the right not to contribute, or to contribute more or less than a suggested amount, without any reprisal. Federal law prohibits Ob-GynPAC to accept contributions from foreign nationals. All corporate contributions to Ob-GynPAC will be used for educational and administrative fees of Ob-GynPAC and other activities permissible by Federal law. Federal law requires Ob-GynPAC to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and employer of individuals who give more than $200 in a calendar year.