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ASSOCIATION

NEWS RELEASE

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Media Statement
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DOs Support SGR Repeal Legislation Released by House Energy & Commerce Committee

Statement attributable to American Osteopathic Association President Ray E. Stowers, DO

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is pleased to see yesterday's release of bipartisan legislation by the House Energy & Commerce Committee to address physician payment reform. As work continues in both the House and Senate to reform the Medicare physician payment system and to permanently repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula for physicians participating in the Medicare program, the AOA urges Congress to swiftly move toward approving a final legislative solution for this problem, which has now spanned more than a decade.

Temporary solutions such as the annual patches that freeze payment levels, impede access to quality care for Medicare patients and are no longer a financially viable option for Congress, Medicare and physicians.

The AOA is encouraged by recent progress made by the Energy & Commerce Committee in developing a proposal that addresses many of the problems with the current payment system, and appreciates the opportunities to provide physician feedback and the transparent process used in developing each iteration of the draft legislation. Consistent with the AOA's highest priorities for reforming Medicare payment for physicians, the current proposal:

- Permanently repeals the SGR, allowing physicians the stability they need to innovate and invest in practice improvements;
- Incorporates positive payment updates to all physicians during the period of stability of a minimum of five years;
- Authorizes new "alternative payment models" coupled with a quality-enhanced fee-for-service model that provides opportunities for all physicians to be successful in the new system and offers an incentive structure providing appropriate motivation to physicians to transition to either of these models;

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- Builds on and improves the existing Physician Quality Reporting System, ensuring streamlined quality reporting and helps minimize physicians' administrative burdens;
- Calls for specific, meaningful and timely—at minimum, quarterly—feedback on quality and performance to physicians from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that helps physicians transform their practices and improve patient care, as well as enables individual physicians to see where their practice and practice patterns are in comparison to others;
- Provides additional incentives for physicians qualifying as a medical home who provide care coordination for patients with complex chronic conditions.

At no other time has there been a stronger opportunity to seize the lowered cost of repeal and the continued bipartisan interest in finding a durable and long-term solution toward enacting a stable Medicare payment system for physicians. The AOA implores Congress to build on this momentum and ensure that payment reform legislation is enacted into law this year, and applauds the work of the Energy & Commerce Committee.

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About the American Osteopathic Association

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) proudly represents its professional family of more than 104,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students; promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools; and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org.