

# NEWS RELEASE

# AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

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## **APA Presses Congress to Block Cuts in Medicare Payments to Physicians**

**ARLINGTON, Va. (Nov. 18, 2009)** – American Psychiatric Association Medical Director and CEO James H. Scully, Jr., M.D., sent letters to Members of Congress yesterday urging them to pass H.R. 3961, the Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act of 2009, a bill that would block a 21 percent cut in Medicare payments to physicians.

If the cuts are not blocked by Congress, Medicare patients may have trouble accessing medical care, as some doctors may elect to opt out of seeing new Medicare patients.

“Reductions of this magnitude are in no one’s best interest, least of all the 44 million Americans who depend on Medicare for their health care needs, or the military families under TRICARE with payments based on Medicare rates,” said Scully in his letter to Members of Congress. “We respectfully submit that there are at least 44 million reasons why you *should* support the bill.”

Congress has blocked the formula-driven cuts each year since 2002, but the APA has long sought a permanent solution to the flawed Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate formula. Restructuring Medicare’s payment system is a crucial reform that will not just preserve, but also improve, access to care for America’s seniors and individuals with disabilities.

“APA members are very grateful for the year-to-year postponement of the formula-driven cuts, but also clearly recognize that the SGR – created by Congress – is fatally flawed and requires a permanent solution,” Scully stated in his letter.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose 38,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org) and [www.HealthyMinds.org](http://www.HealthyMinds.org).

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