



TO: All ASCRS/ASOA Members

Date: February 16, 2012

Conference Committee Reaches Agreement to Prevent 27.4% Medicare Physician Payment Reduction; Vote Expected Before the Weekend

Late Wednesday night, the Conference Committee reached an agreement on a 10-month extension of the payroll tax holiday, unemployment benefits, and the current Medicare physician payment levels through the end of 2012. Specifically, this prevents the 27.4% Medicare physician payment cut from going into effect on March 1, but due to the cliff financing physicians will face a 32% cut on January 1, 2013. The short term "fix" is offset through reductions in a number of health care programs, including Medicare bad debt payments to hospitals and the prevention fund created by the Affordable Care Act. Other expiring Medicare policies were also extended through the end of the year, including the "floor" on geographic adjustments to the physician work component of the Medicare fee schedule. The measure is headed toward a vote before Congress leaves town for a District Work Period, perhaps as early as Friday.

Click on the following link to view the [summary](#).

ASCRS will continue to advocate for a permanent solution to the SGR formula during the 10-month reprieve. Additional details will be available in *Washington Watch Weekly*.