

There's a New Look for INTERNAL MEDICINE NEWS

INTERNAL MEDICINE NEWS is changing its look and content to meet your information needs.

Over the last year, we listened as our readers and editorial advisers described how they want to read the news.

You told us that you want a front page that offers information about what's inside each issue.

You want news reports that allow you to see at a glance the article's most salient point as well as the source and strength of the data.

You want transparency regarding conflicts of interest.

You value more perspectives on the news from both peers and experts as well as insights on how new findings might affect your practice.

We heard you.

This issue of INTERNAL MEDICINE NEWS introduces new features that are designed to do an even better job of meeting your information needs.

The front page now features "What's New," offering brief article summaries that will help you navigate the publication.

Inside, you'll find "Vitals." These handy boxes give a quick overview of an article's major finding, data source, and disclosures. You'll see a few "Vitals" boxes in this issue and more in the months to come.

"My Take" boxes will accompany selected articles; they will underline take-home messages and provide contrasting viewpoints on the news.

INTERNAL MEDICINE NEWS is proud to bring you the news you need to stay up to date in internal medicine. Please let us know how we can continue to meet your information needs by e-mailing us at imnews@elsevier.com.

Thank you for allowing INTERNAL MEDICINE NEWS to be your first choice for specialty news.

*Calvin Pierce, Managing Editor
Mary Jo M. Dales, Editor in Chief*

Last-Minute SGR Law Delays Medicare Pay Cut for 2 Months

BY ALICIA AULT

A Defense Department spending bill that included a 2-month delay in the scheduled 21% cut in the rate that Medicare pays physicians was signed into law by President Obama on Dec. 19.

The presidential signature came shortly after the Senate's 88-10 vote on the same day in favor of the legislation.

Physician groups have not given up on securing a permanent overhaul to the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula, which governs the Medicare payment rate.

In a statement, Dr. J. James Rohack, president of the American Medical Association, said that the group agreed with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), who removed a 1-year SGR fix from his health reform package with an aim of separately winning a permanent overhaul.

"As we call for a permanent solution, the AMA acknowledges the House and Senate votes to stop the cuts for 2 months so that access to care for Medicare and TRICARE patients is not disrupted while the Senate works on solving the problem once and for all," Dr. Rohack said in the statement commenting on the SGR vote.

The House of Representatives had voted for a permanent fix in a standalone bill, but the Senate later rejected it.

Neither the House nor the Senate had included a permanent fix for the SGR payment formula in their respective health reform bills.

The fee reduction was due to go into effect Jan. 1.

Lawmakers, who had few legislative vehicles left to avert the imminent Medicare fee cut, opted to attach the delay to the Defense spending bill, knowing that, with American military deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the bill's passage was a must-do proposition.

The \$636 billion Defense appropriations bill had previously been passed in the House.

The package includes almost \$14 billion in non-Defense spending, including an extension of unemployment benefits and subsidies to help pay for COBRA benefits. ■

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Case Study In:

Management Decisions in a Comorbid Patient With Type 2 Diabetes Having Primary Hyperlipidemia

A supplement supported by Daiichi-Sankyo.

Available at:
www.internalmedicine.com/content/medicaleducationlibrary

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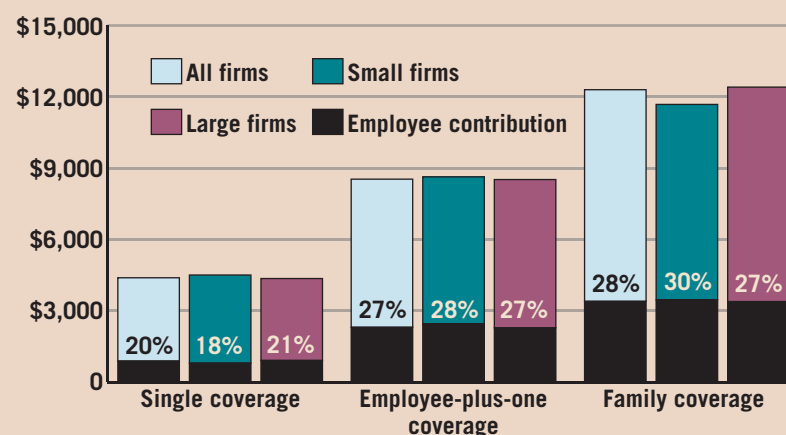
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VITAL SIGNS

Most Employees Contribute Less Than 30% to Their Total Health Insurance Premium



Note: Small firms have fewer than 50 employees.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research, 2008 data