

December 23, 2013

#### UPDATE - Medicare Payment Reform Legislation

The House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee have taken important steps in the move to repeal the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula that serves as the underpinning of Medicare physician payment.

While the Ways and Means bill would provide a 0.5 percent positive payment update through 2016, with a freeze from 2017 – 2023, the Senate Finance Committee legislation would place a freeze on Medicare physician payment for 10 years.

As of now, there is no word on how the SGR repeal will be paid for, but there is always the potential for policy changes that would affect specific sectors of health care. SCCT will keep you apprised of action by the full House of Representatives and the full Senate when they convene in 2014 to consider these reform proposals. Be assured we will oppose any further reductions in imaging to pay for overall Medicare payment reforms.

#### Temporary Halt to Medicare Payment Cuts through March 2014

Before Congress adjourned for the year, both the House and Senate approved a 0.5 percent positive update to Medicare physician payment for the first three months of 2014. This action staves off the -24.1 percent cut that was slated to take effect on January 1, 2014, for each and every service provided to Medicare beneficiaries. This action allows the full House and Senate to complete consideration of pending Medicare reform legislation.