February 25, 2014

The Honorable John A. Boehner  The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives
United States Capitol, Room H-232 United States Capitol, Room H-204
Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

I write on behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the medical specialty association representing approximately 35,000 psychiatric physicians and their patients, to express support for H.R. 4015, *The SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act of 2014*.

An immediate and permanent repeal of the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula is required in order to provide much-needed stability to the Medicare physician payment system. It is time to take action, and to stop the cycle of short-term patches that merely address the immediate crisis posed by whatever cut is currently pending. Over the past dozen years, Congress has spent more than $150 billion on patches, which is far more than the cost to make needed permanent reforms to the Medicare physician payment system. This legislation provides new investments designed to encourage a healthcare delivery system of high quality and value to patients and offers important opportunities for physicians to collaborate with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on how best to measure standards of care.

More and more physicians are opting out of Medicare each year due to their inability to sustain a practice on decreased reimbursement rates. Fixing the flawed SGR will help to improve access to critical medical services by encouraging physicians to take Medicare patients. Short-term remedies are no longer acceptable. You must pass a long-term solution to fix the SGR and establish a transition to a more stable Medicare physician payment policy to better serve America’s senior citizens.
The leadership and members of APA look forward to working with you to ensure a swift repeal of the flawed SGR, and the implementation of Medicare reforms that properly meets the needs of our physicians and their patients.

Sincerely,

Saul M. Levin, M.D., M.P.A.
CEO and Medical Director