November 13, 2014

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democrat Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Reid, Leader McConnell and Leader Pelosi:

The College of American Pathologists (CAP) urges permanent repeal of the flawed Medicare Physician Payment Sustainable Growth Rate Formula (SGR) during the lame-duck session. The time to act is now and the CAP stands ready to work with you to get the job done.

CAP appreciates your commitment to finding a resolution to the SGR crisis, which for more than a decade has created uncertainty for physicians and threatened access to care for Medicare’s seniors. Republicans and Democrats on key health committees in both the House and Senate have worked tirelessly to find common ground, resulting in introduction of bipartisan, bicameral legislation, H.R. 4015/S. 2000, the SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act of 2014. CAP supports this legislation and encourages Congress to find a path forward to enact this measure into law this year.

We’re concerned that delaying action until the new Congress could result in another costly, short-term “patch” that neither fixes the problem nor provides the important payment reforms included in the bipartisan repeal bills. In particular, CAP welcomes reforms in the legislation that account for differences in specialty practice and provide flexibility in meeting quality measures under the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS), Electronic Health Record Meaningful Use (EHR MU) and the Value Based Modifier (VBM) programs.

We understand the challenges that come with addressing the cost of permanent repeal. However, the cost has come down considerably – from $300 billion two years ago to approximately $138 billion – providing a window to act before costs escalate again.

In closing, CAP appreciates your consideration and looks forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue for seniors and the physicians they depend on.

Sincerely,

Gene N. Herbek MD, FCAP
President
College of American Pathologists