



Physicians Caring for Texans



How to Talk to Your Patients About the Medicare Meltdown

First, explain the problem. Then, discuss the solutions. Finally, prescribe a call to action.

Explain the problem:

I love my Medicare patients, but Congress is making it harder and harder for me to continue to care for them.

Over the past ten years, Medicare's payments to physicians have been frozen. During those same ten years, the costs of running my practice and overall inflation have been rising. Now, Congress has allowed a huge cut in Medicare payments to take place. All things considered, we've taken an 83-percent cut over the past ten years. Doctors can no longer afford to subsidize Medicare. How can Congress expect doctors to stay in the Medicare program?

Through all these cuts, your Medicare premiums continue to go up. Payroll deductions for working people contributing to Medicare continue to go up. What's wrong here?

For ten years, doctors have pleaded with congress to fix Medicare. For ten years, they've ignored us and allowed the problem to get worse.

Allowing Medicare to collapse is the last thing we need at a time when baby boomers are starting to depend on the program, too. I didn't go into medicine to shut doors and turn patients away. This is really a horrible situation for doctors and physicians alike.

Discuss the solution:

Senior citizens, military families, and people with disabilities depend on Medicare for their health care. It is what our country has promised them. All of us have paid into the Medicare system. We need a permanent solution to protect Medicare. Elderly patients, people with disabilities, and families in the military deserve secure and stable health care.

Congress understands the problem, but they have refused to take action for years. Every delay hurts more Medicare patients. The time for Congress to act is now.

If Congress and President Obama really want health system reform, they must fix the Medicare system. We need a rational Medicare physician payment system that automatically keeps up with the cost of running a practice and is backed by a fair, stable funding formula.