



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY
Making a world of difference in cancer care.

Dear Oncology Practice Insider Subscribers:

The following ASCO Cancer Policy Alert is the latest information on the SGR. You are being sent this message based on your OPI subscription in an effort to keep you informed of ASCO activities that impact your oncology practice or maybe pertinent to the oncology field. Please visit the [Cancer Policy Alert webpage](#) for up to date information.

CMS to Process Medicare Claims Today with 21.3% cut; Senate Passes 6-month Patch - Needs House Approval

Today, CMS will begin processing Medicare claims including the full 21.3% cut, which is due to the sustainable growth rate formula (SGR). This is because Congress failed to act to avert the cut before the deadline. On its fourth attempt, the Senate finally passed a stand-alone 6-month patch this afternoon. **The House of Representatives needs to approve this version of the bill - but it has already adjourned for the weekend.** While the patch will be retroactive, this means that CMS will likely pay claims with the 21.3% cut until the bill is signed into law. We expect the House to vote on this bill early next week.

Status of Claims

On Monday, June 14, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a statement about the ongoing crisis, saying "CMS is now directing its contractors to continue holding June 1 and later claims through Thursday, June 17, **lifting the hold on Friday, June 18.**" Since CMS has not released any further instruction, contractors should begin processing claims with the 21.3% cut in place. ASCO is awaiting further statements or direction from CMS and will update you as new information becomes available.

Congressional Stalemate

This latest 6-month patch follows a series of unsuccessful attempts to stave off the cuts. What started as a five-year patch has dwindled to six months.

Congressional inertia has created an outrageous and untenable situation for medical providers across the country. We know this environment has made sustaining oncology practices extremely difficult: tough on you and tough on your patients. We are reaching out to you today through this alert, [a video statement and an editorial](#) by ASCO CEO Allen Lichter, MD about the ongoing SGR crisis. As you will hear from Dr. Lichter, ASCO understands and supports the need for a temporary patch to allow Congress time to repeal the broken SGR system. But the only real solution to this is complete overhaul-repeal of an unworkable, unfair, deeply flawed system.

We Need Your Continued Action

[Please contact your Representative](#), even if you have done so already. They need to hear from you, their constituents, about how this roller coaster ride of payment starts and stops is affecting

your practice and your patients.

- Tell your Representative that you are a constituent from his/her state and that you are facing a 21.3% cut TODAY
- Urge your Representative to support the Senate SGR bill and pass it as quickly as possible
- Explain that even though you support a temporary patch, a permanent repeal is needed to sustain your practice for your patients. If you can give specific examples of the issues your practice faces - and the tough decisions you have to make, please give them. Will you continue to see Medicare patients? Will you have to furlough staff? Will you not get paid? Will you be able to pay the rent for your office? Will you be able to pay your vendors? Will your practice have to close?

If it passes the House, we will be facing expiration of this patch in a little over 5 months. It is important that you keep constant pressure on every Member of Congress to ensure permanent repeal of the SGR.

[Visit ASCO's Grassroots Action Center](#) for all the information you need to contact your Representative and Senators. It only takes a few minutes of your time, but your input is immeasurable.

Keep up to date - visit [ASCO in Action](#) and follow ASCO on [Twitter](#).

If you have any questions - please contact ASCO's Cancer Policy & Clinical Affairs Department at 571-483-1670 or publicpolicy@asco.org.