

## **Form Letter from a Physician:**

Email:

<http://www.regulations.gov/search/index.jsp>

Mail:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services,  
Department of Health and Human Services,  
**Attention:** CMS-1413-P,  
P.O.Box 8013,  
Baltimore, MD 21244-8013

As a cardiologist and a member of the Georgia Chapter of the ACC, I am committed to providing high-quality, evidence-based patient care. However, the payment reductions included in the proposed 2010 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (CMS-1413-P) will make that difficult.

I am especially concerned that the proposed fee schedule reduces reimbursement for services fundamental to prevention and early diagnosis. Specifically, in 2010, the fee schedule would no longer reimburse consultations at a higher level than typical physician visits, and fees for diagnostic angiograms would be reduced by 13%. These and other cardiovascular services have resulted in 40%-50% reduced mortality from heart disease from 1968 to 2000 and contributed to 25.8% reductions in age-adjusted death rates from coronary artery disease between 1999 and 2007. We have made tremendous strides in the fight against cardiovascular disease. This is not the time to reduce our efforts!

This proposal inflicts on average 14% reductions in payments for cardiology based entirely on the results of a practice expense survey completed by only 55 cardiologists. Virtually no information is available to the public regarding these 55 respondents. It is unknown what types of practices the respondents have or whether they are representative of the average cardiovascular practice. By contrast, the survey data currently used to derive rates passed stringent statistical tests regarding reliability and representativeness.

The idea that cardiologists' practice expenses dropped by 33% over the past several years is ludicrous!

Most important, I am very concerned that these changes will impact patients' ability to access optimal cardiovascular care.

Please do not implement these changes in 2010.

Sincerely,  
(your signature)