Dozens Of Provider and Consumer Groups Urge SGR Fix During Lame Duck

A large coalition comprising provider groups and consumer advocates and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is pressing congressional leaders to fix the Medicare physician payment formula during the lame-duck session to take advantage of a bicameral, bipartisan deal from earlier this year that lobbyists worry could fall apart when the new Congress convenes.

“We write to you today urging you to consider and pass bipartisan-bicameral legislation to repeal the flawed Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula, reform payment for physicians and other health professionals, and address the equally important healthcare ‘extenders,’ during the lame duck session of Congress,” the letter from dozens of lobbying groups states.

Last week, the House GOP Doctors Caucus and more than 110 lawmakers said the lame duck session offers an opportunity to pass SGR legislation. The Senate Finance and House Ways & Means and Energy & Commerce committees negotiated an SGR replacement deal this past spring, but the two parties couldn’t agree on how to pay for it. That bill likely would have to be renegotiated if Congress doesn’t pass it this year. That puts some pressure on lawmakers to vote on the measure before the new Congress starts in January, but offsets remain a huge obstacle, and the real deadline for action is when the funding patch runs out at the end of March.