



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

March 20, 2014

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I am writing to express support for the *Medicare SGR Repeal and Beneficiary Access Improvement Act of 2014* (S. 2110). ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for more than 173,070 audiologists, speech-language pathologists, speech, language, and hearing scientists, audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel, and students. We commend your continued efforts to address this issue and appreciate the willingness of your staff to engage in stakeholder feedback on these important issues. We support your efforts to repeal and reform the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula and are pleased that the legislation also repeals the Medicare cap for outpatient therapy services.

The therapy caps were created at the same time as the sustainable growth rate policy and ASHA believes that these policies should be fixed together as part of Medicare payment reform. The uncertainty caused by yearly short-term fixes is not good for providers and, certainly in terms of outpatient therapy services, is harmful to beneficiaries who frequently forgo care when they have been informed that the cap may go back into place. A permanent solution, as proposed in S. 2110, will create stability in provider payments as well as give assurance to beneficiaries that they can receive the medically necessary outpatient therapy they require.

Over 100 of our association leaders were in town last week for their annual Capitol Hill Day. Passage of S. 2110 was a high priority in their discussions with their Senators. Additionally, we are formally activating our grassroots network in support of the passage of S. 2110, and believe that moving forward with a conference committee with the House of Representatives on these issues is the next critical step in making permanent reform a reality.

Thank you again for your leadership on Medicare reform. ASHA looks forward to working with you and your staff as this legislation moves forward. If you or your Committee staff requires additional information or resources, please contact Ingrida Lusic, ASHA's director of federal and political advocacy, at ilusic@asha.org or 202-624-5951.

Sincerely,

2014 ASHA President