

Washington, DC - This morning, the House Committee on Small Business Subcommittee on Regulations, Healthcare, and Trade called a hearing to examine upcoming cuts to physician reimbursement rates for Medicare and the potentially damaging impacts these cuts would have on patients and small medical practices in America. Under current law, Medicare will cut physician payment rates by 10 percent in 2008 which could potentially result in dramatic decreases in access to care.

"Cutting Medicare's reimbursement rates would result in many practitioners, particularly smaller practices, denying or limiting access to care," said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20), Chairman of the Subcommittee. "For many small practices, Medicare patients comprise a significant percentage of their practices and require greater medical attention; a 10% cut in payments will hinder their ability to provide quality care to those in need," he added.

Faced with continuously rising costs, these pending cuts could create a scenario where small practices are forced to forego treating Medicare patients altogether. This morning's hearing was part of a larger effort to address the implications of the pending cuts and their impact on administered healthcare in America.

"Medicare is obviously an important component in our nation's healthcare system. Without physicians treating these patients, a large part of our nation's most vulnerable citizen's risk losing healthcare altogether," said Gonzalez. "On behalf of these citizens, we must reform our system rationally and sensibly with a solution that accounts for the significant role small practices play in administering healthcare in America," he added.

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