We are pleased to inform you that Congress has finally taken action to halt the scheduled 26.5% Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) cut, preventing an untenable reduction in psychologist reimbursement that would have harmed patient access and undermined our nation’s commitment to its seniors. After intense legislative wrangling on New Year’s Eve and into New Year’s Day, the Senate passed the one-year delay through 2013 as part of the “American Taxpayer Relief Act” (HR 8) by a vote of 89-8[^1]. The House then passed the measure by a 257-167[^2] margin and sent it to the President for his signature. This means this devastating cut was effectively avoided on January 1 when the 2013 Medicare Fee Schedule took effect.

Primarily focused on averting the tax aspects of the fiscal cliff, ATRA left many high priority items unaddressed or under-addressed, including the nation’s debt limit and the spending sequestration. Without the combined advocacy of patients, our allies in the provider community and the more than 40,400 messages sent directly by psychologists to their elected officials, the SGR fix would not have made it into the package. Thank you for your tireless grassroots efforts that made this a reality!

This marks the 15th time Congress has blocked the SGR cut since 2001. While this development is clearly welcome news, the time is long overdue for a permanent replacement of the flawed SGR formula with a payment system that appropriately values the cost-efficient services psychologists provide. We will keep you posted as your help is needed in the months ahead to keep this harmful cut at bay and advance the other top priorities of professional practice. Thank you very much!

APAPO: Putting Your Practice Assessment to Work