



# CHOICE

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## Medicare Doctor Fee Cuts Still Looming for 2008 — ICA Calls for Immediate Action

Unless Congress acts soon, physician payments under Medicare's Part B will be cut by 10 percent, effective January 1, 2008, taking a bite of more than \$80 million out of chiropractic income from this massive federal program, and making it more difficult for providers of all types to remain in the program. Under Medicare's controversial Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula, cuts in physician payments are mandated and automatic whenever growth in these expenditures outstrips growth in Gross Domestic Product. In the past, Congress has acted at the last minute to postpone such mandated cuts, but the clock is ticking and time is limited if the 2008 cuts are to be delayed.

In addition to the 2008 cut, physician fees are scheduled to be reduced by another 5 percent on January 1, 2009. This is based on the same SRG formula, all at a time when the federal Medicare

Payment Advisory Committee has recommended that Congress increase payment rates by 1.7 percent in 2008 in line with the estimated practice cost

**"The devastating ripple effect of a 10 percent cut in Medicare fees for chiropractic services should not be ignored or minimized by anyone."**

**James Musick, D.C.**  
**Chair, ICA Legislative Committee**

increase.

"The devastating ripple effect of a 10 percent cut in Medicare fees for chiro-

- Educating the public
- Promoting the principle
- Adjusting the future

practic services should not be ignored or minimized by anyone concerned about fairness or patient choice in this program," said ICA Legislative Committee Chair Dr. James E. Musick. "Many other programs set their reimbursement schedules by Medicare. For example, in California, workers' compensation payments are determined by Medicare's fee schedule, so a cut in Medicare means a cut in workers' compensation in California, and elsewhere down the line in

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**CHIROPRACTIC SUMMIT**  
**ON INNATE INTELLIGENCE**  
**December 7-8, 2007**  
**Bally's, Las Vegas**  
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## Direct Access Legislation for Veterans Needs Chiropractic's Unanimous Support

California Rep. Bob Filner has introduced vitally important legislation, HR 1471, the "Better Access to Chiropractors to Keep our Veterans Healthy Act (BACK Veterans Health Act)," which would provide for urgently needed reforms in the way veteran beneficiaries of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs can access chiropractic services.

This important legislation would:

- Provide for direct access for veterans to chiropractic services and end the current climate of discrimination in which some DVA medical professionals refuse requests for referral to a doctor of chiropractic.
- Expand the list of chiropractic services available to eligible veterans through the DVA health care programs, thus providing for a level of care comparable to other first-class healthcare delivery programs.
- Provide veterans a greater say in their own health care decision-making.

"This legislation represents a critical frontier for the veteran and the chiropractic profession alike," said ICA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Dr. Michael S. McLean. "Every doctor of chiropractic in the United States needs to make the passage of this bill a top priority and personally act today to get their U.S. House of Representatives Member to sign on as a co-sponsor."

Dr. McLean served as a member of the Chiropractic Veterans Advisory Committee established by Congress in 2001 to assist in the effective implementation of chiropractic benefits in the Department of Veterans Affairs. ICA continually made direct access a top priority, but was unsuccessful to secure through those deliberations this right for veterans.

HR 1471 will help address the long waiting periods veterans are experiencing when seeking chiropractic care and the documented reluctance or outright refusal of medical doctors and physical

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## Governor Schwarzenegger Vetoes Bill that Would Have Been Costly and Disruptive to Californian DCs

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has stepped forward on behalf of sound public policy and acted in the best interests of the chiropractic profession and the public in California by vetoing the dangerous and disruptive Senate Bill 801. This legislation would have dramatically revised the way in which the chiropractic profession is regulated in the nation's largest state, and would have placed a measure on the June 2008 election ballot



Governor Schwarzenegger

for consideration by state-wide voters, with election costs funded by the state's chiropractic licensing fees. This election ballot measure, if it had not been vetoed by the Governor, would have required a massive expenditure of time, effort and resources on the part of the chiropractic profession to defeat.

ICA was informed by the Governor's office of his veto action moments after

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