



## **TMA STATEMENT — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Feb. 22, 2010

### **Countdown to Medicare Meltdown: Day 7**

***The following can be attributed to William H. Fleming III, MD, president of the Texas Medical Association. Dr. Fleming's statement addresses how the impending Medicare physician payment cuts slated for March 1, 2010 will affect Texas patients.***

"We are on the brink of a meltdown in Medicare. In just seven days, Medicare will cut physician fees by 21.2 percent. A cut this huge will force doctors to make a terrible choice, just to keep their practices open. In fact, 43 percent of Texas physicians currently treating Medicare patients said the cuts would force them out of Medicare all together. Another 37 percent said the cuts would cause them to limit the number of new Medicare patients they treat.

What is Congress waiting for? Allowing Medicare to collapse is the last thing we need at a time when baby boomers are aging into the program. It's not why any of us went into medicine — to shut doors and turn patients away. This is really a horrible situation for patients and physicians alike. We need a rational Medicare physician payment system that automatically keeps up with the cost of running a practice and is backed by a fair, stable funding formula."

TMA is the largest state medical society in the nation, representing nearly 45,000 physician and medical student members. It is located in Austin and has 120 component county medical societies around the state. TMA's key objective since 1853 is to improve the health of all Texans.

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