1. CALL TO ACTION: Medicare Ambulance Relief Legislation

Please write to your Members of Congress to ask them to cosponsor the Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act of 2011 (S. 424, H.R. 1005). The legislation was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) and in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressmen Charles Boustany (R-LA) and Richard Neal (D-MA). Please write to your Members of Congress today.

S. 424 and H.R. 1005 would provide a 6% increase in base and mileage rates under the Medicare ambulance fee schedule for transports originating in urban and rural areas and extend the "super rural" base rate increase for transports originating in extremely remote areas. The increases would start on January 1, 2012 and expire on December 31, 2016. The relief would replace the current temporary relief of 2% in urban areas and 3% in rural areas and extend the super rural provision.

Writing Letters is Easy and takes Only Minutes

We have posted sample letters to your Members of Congress on our Capwiz site and the system does all the work for you. You can access the online letter writing tool by going to the AAA website at www.the-aaa.org and selecting "Contact Your Members of Congress" from the dropdown menu under "On Capitol Hill."

Please forward this Call To Action to members of your state association as well as your staff and colleagues.

Please write your Members of Congress today!

2. Impact of a Government Shutdown on Medicare Payments

Last Friday night, the U.S. Government came close to shutting down. The President and congressional leaders reached an agreement on a budget for the rest of 2011 with only hours to spare. In the event that there is a future government shutdown, the AAA has determined that Medicare payments to ambulance service providers should continue without interruption for at least a couple of weeks if not longer. CMS officials
have made statements to this fact regarding all providers and suppliers. However, the Administration did not issue an official guidance regarding Medicare payments. The Administration did release guidance for certain parts of the Federal government that would have been impacted by a government shutdown. The AAA will keep you posted on possible future government shutdowns.

3. Congress Sends 1099 Repeal Bill to President

As reported last week, the Senate and House have voted to repeal the expansion of the 1099 tax reporting requirements. The 1099 provision, which would start January 1, 2012, would require business owners to file a tax reporting document to the IRS for all vendors from which they buy $600 or more worth of goods or services within a year. On April 6, the Congress officially sent the bill to the President for his signature.

While the President is expected to sign the bill into law, the White House is currently accepting comments on the bill. If you would like to submit a comment, please click here.

4. Cosponsors of Medicare Ambulance Relief Legislation

The Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act of 2011 (MAAPA) was introduced in the Senate on March 1 by Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) and in the House on March 10 by Congressmen Charles Boustany (R-LA) and Richard Neal (D-MA). MAAPA (S. 424, H.R. 1005) would provide a 6% increase under the Medicare ambulance fee schedule for ambulance transports originating in urban or rural areas and extend the bonus base payment of 22.6% for ambulance transports originating in super rural areas. The increases would be for five years starting January 1, 2012.

Last year, the AAA was successful in efforts to extend the temporary 2% urban, 3% rural and super rural bonus increases until the end of 2011. The relief from MAAPA would take the place of the current temporary Medicare ambulance relief and would not be in addition to it. Medicare ambulance relief is the top legislative priority of the AAA.

Current Cosponsors of MAAPA

Below is a list, current as of today, of members of Congress who have officially been added as cosponsors to MAAPA (S. 424, H.R. 1005). Since our last report, Congressman Aaron Schock (R-IL) has been added as a cosponsor of H.R. 1005. Several other members of Congress have agreed to be cosponsors but have not yet been officially added. The names of the lead sponsors of the bills are underlined.

IL: Rep. Aaron Schock
KS: Sen. Pat Roberts
LA: Rep. Charles Boustany
ME: Sen. Susan Collins
NY: Sen. Charles Schumer
ND: Sen. Kent Conrad