

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 375

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a minimum geographic cost-of-practice index value for physicians' services furnished under the medicare program of 1.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 12, 2003

Mr. DOMENICI (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Mr. THOMAS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a minimum geographic cost-of-practice index value for physicians' services furnished under the medicare program of 1.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Medicare Access Equity Act of 2003”.

6 (b) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
7 ings:

1 (1) Americans have paid taxes in to the medi-
2 care program equally across the country and every
3 American should have access to quality health care.

4 (2) There is a national market for health care
5 providers.

6 (3) Increasingly, private insurance companies
7 tie their reimbursement rates to those paid by medi-
8 care.

9 (4) The physician fee schedule formula for
10 medicare currently includes several adjustments for
11 variable costs throughout the nation. While it is ap-
12 propriate for the cost of running a practice to reflect
13 overhead differences, physicians should not be com-
14 pensated for their time differently based on where
15 they live.

16 (5) Medicare beneficiaries pay the same part B
17 premium regardless of location which forces sub-
18 sidization of higher reimbursement areas by seniors
19 in lower reimbursement areas without any cor-
20 responding benefit.

21 (6) Areas of the country that currently receive
22 the lowest reimbursement from medicare are often
23 the same areas that are experiencing the greatest
24 shortage of physicians. Attracting more physicians

1 to these areas cannot be achieved without greater
2 equity in medicare reimbursement.

3 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF FLOOR ON WORK GEOGRAPHIC**
4 **ADJUSTMENT.**

5 Section 1848(e)(1) of the Social Security Act (42
6 U.S.C. 1395w-4(e)(1)) is amended by adding at the end
7 the following new subparagraph:

8 “(E) FLOOR AT 1.0 ON WORK GEOGRAPHIC
9 INDICES.—After calculating the work geo-
10 graphic indices in subparagraph (A)(iii), for
11 purposes of payment for services furnished on
12 or after January 1, 2004, the Secretary shall
13 increase the work geographic index to 1.00 for
14 any locality for which such geographic index is
15 less than 1.00.”

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