

# We don't need no stinking patches

Since 2003, Congress has repeatedly stepped in — sometimes multiple times per year, sometimes retroactively — to block the growing Medicare physician pay cuts mandated by the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula, knowing the reductions threaten seniors' access to care. Meanwhile, the cumulative cost of the fiscal cliffs outweighed the cost of fixing the problem once and for all.

Year	Scheduled Cut	Actual Update	Cost*
2003	-4.4%	1.4%	\$54,000,000,000
2004	-4.5%	1.5%	\$200,000,000 (2004 & 2005)
2005	-3.3%	1.5%	
2006	-4.4%	0.2%	\$-400,000,000
2007	-5.0%	0.5%	\$3,100,000,000
2008 (Jan.-June)	-10.1%	0.0%	\$6,400,000,000
2008 (July-Dec.)	-10.6%	0.0%	\$9,400,000,000 (includes 2009)
2009	n/a†	1.1%	
2010 (Jan.-Feb.)	-21.3%	0.0%	\$2,000,000,000
2010 (March)	-21.3%	0.0%	\$1,000,000,000
2010 (April-May)	-21.3%	0.0%	\$2,000,000,000
2010 (June-Nov.)	-21.3%	2.0%	\$6,000,000,000
2010 (Dec.)	-21.3%	0.0%	\$1,000,000,000
2011	-25.0%	0.0%	\$14,900,000,000
2012 (Jan.-Feb.)	-27.4%	0.0%	\$3,600,000,000
2012 (March-Dec.)	-27.4%	0.0%	\$18,000,000,000
2013	-26.5%	0.0%	\$25,200,000,000
2014	-24.0%	0.5%	\$7,300,000,000 (3 months)
2015	-21.2%	n/a	n/a

Total spent on SGR patches >

\$153,700,000,000

Cost of SGR repeal >

\$141,000,000,000‡

\*All cost scores are 10-year Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates.

†Not applicable; the last 2008 legislation included the 2009 delay.

‡March 25, 2015, CBO score of SGR repeal under the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

Sources: Congressional Research Service, American Medical Association, Texas Medical Association