

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Remarks on Signing the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015

April 16, 2015

I decided that on a day like today, we shouldn't be inside. So I am very pleased to mark a significant bipartisan achievement, and I want to congratulate Speaker Boehner and Leader Nancy Pelosi for the work they did to help make this happen.

For the last 13 years, we have been confronted with what's called a doc fix. Basically, the way the law was written, to deal with Medicaid payments to doctors, there was always the danger each year that suddenly, arbitrarily, doctor payments would get cut off, and that was going to be a significant danger to Medicare patients. And obviously, the doctors would have had a lot of trouble continuing to provide services.

Not only does this legislation permanently fix payments to doctors, but it also improves it, because what it starts doing is encouraging payments based on quality and not the number of tests that are provided or the number of procedures that are applied, but whether or not people actually start feeling better. And it encourages us to continue to make the health care system smarter without denying service. As a consequence, it's going to be good for people who use Medicare, it's going to be good for our seniors. Ultimately, it's going to be good for all of us because what we've seen is, over the last 3, 4 years, the cost of health care has slowed to the lowest levels in 50 years, and part of that's because we're starting to do health care smarter.

This is going to build on that progress that we've already made. It also expands the Children's Health Insurance Program that provides health insurance to young people all across the country, and when our kids are healthy, that means they're going to be healthy adults. Ultimately, that's going to put less strain on the system as well. So this was a bipartisan effort: Republicans and Democrats coming together to do something that's smart and common sense. And my hope is, is it becomes a habit.

But I want to congratulate all of the folks involved. And because we wanted to make sure doctors' payments didn't cut off, I'm signing it now rather than wait for getting Members of Congress down here. Hopefully, sometime next week or the week after, we'll be able to have a reception where I can acknowledge the great work that they did while they're enjoying White House hospitality.

With that, I will start signing the bill.

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

There you go. It's done. Good work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:44 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. H.R. 2, approved April 16, was assigned Public Law No. 114–10.

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