

# Letters to the Editor

## **MEDICARE PAYMENT GAP SHORTCHANGES THE COUNTY**

Are San Luis Obispo County residents entitled to access the best physicians, hospitals and other health care services? Do our health care providers deserve the same Medicare reimbursement rates as their peers in King City and other California cities and counties?

Forty years ago when Medicare was in its infancy our county was designated as rural with a lower cost of living, but that has not been the case for many years. More than a hundred physicians have left the county since 2000 due to low Medicare reimbursement rates, rising business costs, and high cost of living. The current Medicare system with its imbalanced reimbursement system must be corrected.

Recently the county Board of Supervisors joined forces with five other counties in filing a claim against the Health and Human Services Department seeking to recover funds from Medicare underpayments to health care providers. Congresswoman Capps believes there is currently hope for change. Congressman McCarthy has stated the importance of fixing this problem. Momentum is building. The time is now for citizens to raise their voices loudly and persistently to demand equality for our county.

The League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County intends to take action on this urgent issue. Watch for a public forum later this summer that will involve and inform our citizens. Together we can make a difference.

*Donna Sullivan, RN, MS*  
*League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County*  
*Director – Health Issues & Action*