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## **Bush Vetoes Bill Protecting Doctors From Cut in Their Medicare Pay**

WASHINGTON -- President Bush followed through Tuesday on a pledge to veto legislation that would avoid deep cuts in Medicare reimbursements for physicians, but the measure has enough bipartisan support in Congress for an override.

White House opposition to the measure centers around its cuts to the Medicare Advantage program, not the delay in reductions in physician payments. Mr. Bush said in a message to the House of Representatives that the bill is fiscally reckless, would undermine the Medicare prescription drug program and lower Medicare Advantage enrollment by about 2.3 million individuals in 2013.

"For decades, we promised America's seniors we could do better, and we finally did," Mr. Bush said. "We should not turn the clock back to the days when our Medicare system offered outdated and inefficient benefits and imposed needless costs on its beneficiaries."

The bill passed the Senate last week after Sen. Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.) returned to the chamber to cast a dramatic, and crucial, vote and help give the measure a veto-proof majority. The bill passed the House by an overwhelming vote last month. The House and Senate are expected to vote to override Mr. Bush's veto as soon as Tuesday.

The bill would maintain physician payments at the current level, with payments increasing by 1.1% in 2009. The measure also makes cuts to companies that offer private Medicare Advantage plans. The cuts would come to "fee-for-service" plans and payments to private plans with teaching hospitals in their areas.