Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Medicare physicians are facing a 28 percent cut come January 1, 2012, unless this Congress acts to stop it. If left alone, these cuts will force many physicians to stop seeing Medicare beneficiaries, a move that could harm millions of seniors who are in search of care.

It is incomprehensible that congressional Democrats have already cut Medicare provider rates as a way to help pay for ObamaCare and that they again failed to cut provider rates during our debt negotiations this Congress.

Providers in my district and across this country have told me that if Congress continues to cut provider rates they won’t be able to see Medicare patients, pure and simple. In fact, CMS actuary Rick Foster has told us that the cuts to hospitals in ObamaCare alone will force 15 percent of these facilities to close. The seniors in my district tell me they can’t afford to lose their doctors. Let’s get a fix to this problem done, and done permanently.

□ 1220

THE BENEFITS OF HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, health savings accounts have been shown to lower health care costs and allow Americans to have more control over their money and their health care decisions.

Recently the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 14 percent of all workers in the private sector now have access to a health savings account. The number of people with HSAs rose to over 11½ million in January, up from 10 million a year before and 8 million the year before that.

But, Mr. Speaker, health savings accounts are at risk. Under the Affordable Care Act passed in this House of March of 2010, by 2014 there will be a phase-in of what’s known as the medical loss ratio rules that may eliminate the ability of HSAs to continue to exist. It’s all in the hands of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, who, in the past, has not been favorably disposed to HSAs.

Now, Governor Mitch Daniels understands the power of consumer-directed health care. Governor Daniels, when he came and talked to our Health Caucus last year it cost $19 billion, and it will cost more in future years. ObamaCare did not help the cost curve down as it was promised; it just pushed the issue down the road.

Well, we got the President’s type of health care reform. Seniors had to help pay for it, however, by removing $500 billion—a half trillion dollars—from Medicare in order to subsidize ObamaCare. But guess what. That has made Medicare even weaker.

Today we’re trying to find billions of dollars to pay for another temporary fix to Medicare reimbursement rates to ensure access by patients to their physicians. Last year it cost $19 billion, and it will cost more in future years.

ObamaCare did not help the cost curve down as it was promised; it just pushed the issue down the road.

Republicans are committed to getting the doc fix done and finding a permanent solution; but Medicare is running out of money, and these fixes are going to be more expensive. It is time to repeal ObamaCare and replace it with reforms that truly strengthen Medicare for years to come.

HONORING LARIMER COUNTY

(Mr. GARDNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of Larimer County, Colorado.

The first settlers arrived in 1858, and Antoine Janis, who led the party, declared this area present-day Larimer County to be “the loveliest spot on Earth.” Larimer County captures what outsiders envision as Colorado’s true beauty. The county is named after Governor General William Larimer, an early Denver settler and founder who was made the county’s namesake as a tribute.

From the farmlands, to the majestic mountains, to the robust business sector, to the kind people, Larimer County to be “the loveliest spot on Earth.” Larimer County captures what outsiders envision as Colorado’s true beauty. The county is named after Governor General William Larimer, an early Denver settler and founder who was made the county’s namesake as a tribute.

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A PERMANENT FIX TO STOP MEDICARE PROVIDER CUTS

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