

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
H-232, The Capitol
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Democratic Leader
H-204, The Capitol
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
S-221, The Capitol
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned national medical societies and state medical associations write to collectively urge Congress to include in the forthcoming March 2025 appropriations bill, provisions that both reverse the latest round of Medicare payment cuts and provide physicians with a meaningful payment increase that reflects ongoing inflationary pressures. Our organizations were surprised and deeply disappointed that the final version of the American Relief Act 2025 failed to include *any* financial relief for physicians. America's physicians are united in urging Congress to use the forthcoming March appropriations bill as an opportunity to provide physicians with desperately needed fiscal relief that is imperative to ensuring that seniors retain access to health care services under Medicare.

Following Congressional inaction to stop the cuts finalized by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Calendar Year (CY) 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) Final Rule, payments for physicians treating Medicare patients were reduced by an additional 2.83 percent, effective January 1, 2025. The decision to allow previously enacted partial patches to earlier rounds of physician payment reductions to expire without any new relief marks the fifth consecutive year of Medicare physician payment cuts, a truly startling trend that threatens to exacerbate access to care issues throughout the United States. As a result, the unfortunate reality is that physicians' Medicare payments have now been reduced by 33 percent since 2001, when adjusted for inflation in practice costs. In addition, CMS concluded in the CY 2025 MPFS Final Rule that the Medicare Economic Index (MEI), a cumulative measure of the individual costs of running a practice, will increase by 3.5 percent this year. Expecting physicians to provide the same level of care to America's seniors despite being underpaid by over 30 percent and witnessing exponential growth in the cost of providing medical services is simply unsustainable. This cycle threatens to undermine the overarching stability of the Medicare program.

The decision by Congress to extend a variety of other expiring hospital, ambulance, and telehealth provisions in the American Relief Act 2025 without providing physicians any relief was equally troubling. Furthermore, our members understandably think that the federal government has essentially turned its back on physicians following the recent CMS announcement that Medicare Advantage (MA) plans will receive an average payment increase of 4.33 percent from 2025 to 2026. While MA plans receive an increase beyond the expected health care inflation rate, Congress has not acted to incorporate a temporary or permanent inflationary adjustment to the MPFS to ensure adequate access to care.

Thankfully, a bipartisan collection of federal lawmakers has introduced, yet again, another solution to this serious policy issue. Representatives Greg Murphy, MD (R-NC), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Mariannette

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Miller-Meeks, MD (R-IA), and Kim Schrier, MD (D-WA), along with several other bipartisan House members, have introduced an updated version of the Medicare Patient Access and Practice Stabilization Act, H.R. 879. This bipartisan bill will prospectively, specifically between April 1 and December 31, 2025, stop the latest round of payment cuts in full. The bill also provides physicians with a crucial two percent payment increase, which is about half of the MEI estimate for this year. Therefore, we urge Congressional leadership to adopt the Medicare Patient Access and Practice Stabilization Act as part of the forthcoming legislation to fund the government beyond mid-March.

The time for legislative action is now. America's physicians and the millions of patients we treat can no longer accept any excuses, such as an overcrowded legislative calendar, competing policy priorities, or an inability to achieve bipartisan consensus, as reasons for not including provisions that reverse the latest round of cuts and provide a crucial payment update in next appropriations package. We appreciate the opportunity to outline the many fiscal challenges facing physician practices and stand ready to assist with the overarching effort to expeditiously enact this much needed legislation. Our Medicare beneficiaries and the physicians who treat them deserve the stability that this legislation will provide.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association
Academy of Physicians in Clinical Research
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Emergency Medicine
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Academy of Sleep Medicine
American Association for Hand Surgery
American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodagnostic Medicine
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Association of Public Health Physicians
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Lifestyle Medicine
American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics
American College of Mohs Surgery

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American College of Physicians
American College of Radiation Oncology
American College of Radiology
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Epilepsy Society
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society for Laser Medicine & Surgery, Inc.
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society for Surgery of the Hand Professional Organization
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery
American Society of Echocardiography
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Neuroradiology
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine
American Society of Retina Specialists
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association, Inc.
American Venous Forum
Association for Clinical Oncology
Association of American Medical Colleges
College of American Pathologists
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Endocrine Society
Heart Rhythm Society
International Pain and Spine Intervention Society
Medical Group Management Association
Outpatient Endovascular and Interventional Society
Renal Physicians Association
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Vascular Surgery

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Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Interventional Radiology
Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging
The American Society of Breast Surgeons
The American Society of Dermatopathology
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Medical Association of the State of Alabama
Alaska State Medical Association
Arizona Medical Association
Arkansas Medical Society
California Medical Association
Colorado Medical Society
Connecticut State Medical Society
Medical Society of Delaware
Medical Society of the District of Columbia
Florida Medical Association
Medical Association of Georgia
Hawaii Medical Association
Idaho Medical Association
Illinois State Medical Society
Indiana State Medical Association
Iowa Medical Society
Kansas Medical Society
Kentucky Medical Association
Louisiana State Medical Society
Maine Medical Association
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Massachusetts Medical Society
Michigan State Medical Society
Minnesota Medical Association
Mississippi State Medical Association
Missouri State Medical Association
Montana Medical Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nevada State Medical Association
New Hampshire Medical Society
New Mexico Medical Society
North Carolina Medical Society
Medical Society of New Jersey
Medical Society of the State of New York
North Dakota Medical Association
Ohio State Medical Association

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Oklahoma State Medical Association
Oregon Medical Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Rhode Island Medical Society
South Carolina Medical Association
South Dakota State Medical Association
Tennessee Medical Association
Texas Medical Association
Utah Medical Association
Vermont Medical Society
The Medical Society of Virginia
Washington State Medical Association
West Virginia State Medical Association
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wyoming Medical Society