January 17, 2024

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

The Honorable Mitch McConnell Republican Leader United States Senate S-230, The Capitol Washington, DC 20510 The Honorable Charles Schumer Majority Leader United States Senate S-221, The Capitol Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries Minority Leader United States House of Representatives H-204, The Capitol Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned national medical organizations and state medical societies write to strongly urge Congress to quickly pass legislation to reverse the 3.37 percent Medicare physician payment cuts that took effect on January 1, 2024.

Failure to reverse these cuts will be harmful to the continued viability of physician practices and their ability to care for patients. After three consecutive years of cuts to Medicare services, physicians are at a potential breaking point. Facing a nearly 10 percent reduction in Medicare payments over the past four years and rising practice costs on top of the burdens and burnout associated with the pandemic, some practices are already limiting the number of Medicare patients they treat. We anticipate these cuts will be felt hardest by small, independent practices, like those in rural and underserved areas that continue to face significant health care access challenges. Continuing down this path is simply unsustainable.

We appreciate efforts by members of the House and Senate to preserve Medicare patients' access to physician services through introduced legislation that stops these impending cuts, hearings on the flawed Medicare payment system, and Dear Colleague letters urging Congress expeditiously pass bills halting the reductions. We call on Congress to eliminate these cuts in full by increasing the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Conversion Factor retroactive to January 1, 2024, by the appropriations deadline. This is our top legislative priority. Physicians are the only Medicare providers that did not receive an inflation update this year. In fact, they are the only Medicare providers who have a payment cut in 2024.

Medicare payment updates are scheduled for all providers in 2024 EXCEPT physicians.

Medicare provider updates for 2024

basket less a productivity adjustment.

Medicare Economic Index, which has a

productivity adjustment.

omitted for all provider types.

Note:



We need to fix Medicare physician payment NOW.

The FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included an extension of the Medicare sequester that added \$2.2 billion to the Medicare Improvement Fund – more than enough to offset stopping the 3.37 percent physician payment cuts in their entirety without adding to the federal deficit. Setting aside a portion of a Medicare Improvement Fund expansion that is partly financed by future cuts to Medicare physician payments is fair and precedented.

Nearly 200 Members recently wrote¹ Congressional leadership asking for the cuts to be stopped. We urge lawmakers to heed this call by working together and acting quickly to preserve access to care in the Medicare program. Anything less than full relief from the cuts negatively impacts our nation's seniors. The physicians and the Medicare patients they treat deserve better.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association AMDA-The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry American Academy of Emergency Medicine American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery American Academy of Family Physicians

¹ https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2023-12-13-dear-colleague-medicare-payment-cuts-letter-au.pdf

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 Pain Medicine American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons American Association of Neurological Surgeons American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine American Clinical Neurophysiology Society American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology American College of Cardiology American College of Chest Physician 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 American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists American College of Physicians American College of Radiation Oncology American College of Radiology American College of Rheumatology American College of Surgeons American Gastroenterological Association American Geriatrics Society American Medical Group Association American Medical Women's Association 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 of Addiction Medicine American Society of Anesthesiologists American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons American Society of Hematology American Society of Nephrology American Society of Nuclear Cardiology

American Society of Plastic Surgeons American Society of Retina Specialists American Society of Transplant Surgeons American Thoracic Society American Urogynecologic Society American Urological Association American Vein & Lymphatic Society American Venous Forum Association for Clinical Oncology **College of American Pathologists** Congress of Neurological Surgeons **Endocrine Society** Heart Rhythm Society International Pain and Spine Intervention Society Medical Group Management Association National Association of Spine Specialists North American Neuromodulation Society Outpatient Endovascular and Interventional Society **Renal Physicians Association** Society for Vascular Surgery Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography Society of Critical Care Medicine Society of Hospital Medicine Society of Interventional Radiology 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 Society 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

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 Medical Society of New Jersey New Mexico Medical Society Medical Society of the State of New York North Carolina Medical Society North Dakota Medical Association Ohio State Medical Association 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 Medical Society of Virginia Washington State Medical Association West Virginia State Medical Association Wisconsin Medical Society Wyoming Medical Society