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

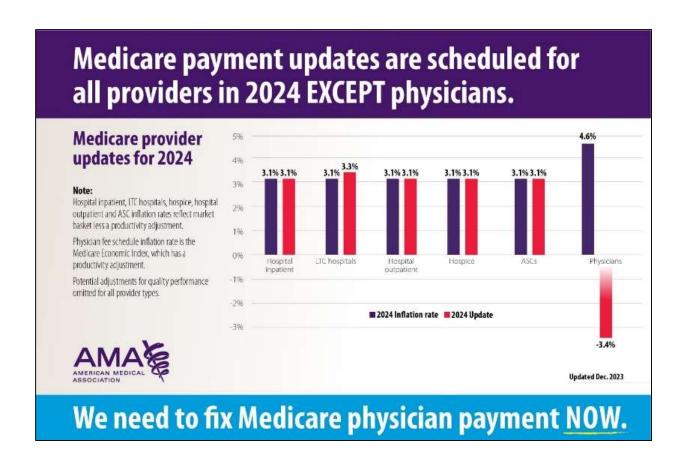
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries Minority Leader United States House of Representatives H-204, The Capitol Washington, DC 20515

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.



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 wrote<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 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 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 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