



MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

Every physician matters, each patient counts.

December 13, 2023

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The Honorable Richard Neal
372 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Neal:

On behalf of the over 25,000 physician, resident, and student members of the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS), I write to urge your support of H.R. 6683, the *Preserving Seniors' Access to Physicians Act*, bipartisan legislation that averts damaging Medicare payment cuts set to take effect in the new year. Continued financial instability contributes to physician burnout, which affects more than half our physician members according to our recent [report](#) on physician well-being.

Absent Congressional intervention, on January 1, 2024, physician practices will face a 3.37% reduction in Medicare payments. These payment cuts undermine the stability and sustainability of physician practices, exacerbating existing strains from outsized inflation and unprecedented workforce challenges, which coupled with increased labor costs will force practices to close or consolidate, severely limiting patients' access to health care, especially amongst rural and underserved populations.

Ever increasing practice costs and decreasing Medicare payment rates leave practices with insufficient resources to provide the comprehensive, quality care Medicare patients deserve. Practice costs have increased 47 percent between 2001 and 2023, while Medicare payments increased only 9% in that same time. When adjusted for inflation, Medicare physician payment has *declined* 26 percent from 2001 to 2023. Physician practices in the Commonwealth are struggling and we simply cannot continue on this path.

We urge Congress to expeditiously pass H.R. 6683 in whatever form possible and block the 3.37 percent payment cut in 2024, which if left in place will accelerate and exacerbate the crisis in access to care for our seniors. Stopping this impending cut is a necessary band-aid while we work together to enact broader reforms to the Medicare payment system, including passage of H.R. 2474, the *Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act*, which would provide an inflationary update to Medicare physician payments consistent with all other Medicare providers.

We must preserve Medicare's guarantee of access to care for our nation's seniors who rely on it. We greatly appreciate your consideration and support of all necessary measures to accomplish this critical imperative and are happy to connect at your convenience to discuss further or respond to any questions that you or your staff may have.

Sincerely,

Barbara S. Spivak, MD

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