



December 1, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to urge Congress to protect patient access to care by preventing scheduled year-end Medicare cuts adversely affecting physicians in every state. Congress needs to act to preserve stability for physician-led care for Medicare beneficiaries. Specifically, physician practices face arbitrary payment cuts on January 1, 2023, as a result of budget neutrality (BN) requirements in the annual fee schedule and a lack of inflationary updates in Medicare payments, which other sectors of the health care system are already scheduled to receive.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 160,000 internal medicine physicians, related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and compassion to the preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Internal medicine specialists treat many of the patients at greatest risk from COVID-19, including the elderly and patients with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

We are grateful for past Congressional action that temporarily averted a cut to Medicare physician payments that was scheduled to take effect this past January. As you know, those cuts stem from a complex set of budget rules and systemic flaws within the Medicare physician fee schedule that, unless addressed in a comprehensive way, will continue to plague physicians. Since previous Congressional action only provided temporary relief from a portion of the Medicare cuts in 2022, Congress must act before the end of this year to prevent a 4.5 percent cut in 2023.

The challenge posed to patient access to physician-led care by the looming 4.5 percent BN cut is exacerbated by physician payment rates not being updated for inflation and more accurately reflecting the cost of health care delivery. The financial effect of a freeze on annual payment rates has been especially severe over the past two years as expenses rose substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation rates have increased to the highest level in decades. Even without the BN cuts, current payment rates are not sustainable for physicians to cover basic practice expenses including payroll for their staff, maintenance and rent for their office buildings, and the purchase of new health information technology and equipment to advance the quality of health care they provide to their patients. According to an [American Medical Association analysis](#) of Medicare Trustees data, Medicare physician payment has decreased by 20 percent from 2001–2021 when adjusted for inflation.

Given these challenges, we implore you to prevent the entire 4.5 percent BN cut from happening through any year-end legislation. As many physicians are still struggling with the financial challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of annual positive inflationary updates in their Medicare reimbursement, we urge Congress to pass legislation that provides financial stability for our practices so that we can maintain access to care for our patients. ACP is counting on your support for these initiatives and stands ready to serve as a resource on this issue and any clinical matters where our expertise could be of benefit. If you have any questions, please contact George Lyons at [glyons@acponline.org](mailto:glyons@acponline.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RDM', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Ryan D. Mire, MD, MACP  
President