

December 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Capitol Building, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Republican Leader
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
U.S. Capitol Building, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the professional medical organizations whose members are the backbone of the nation's COVID-19 response in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living, and other post-acute settings, we are writing to ask for Congress to take swift action to stop, delay or mitigate the upcoming cuts to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS). The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently finalized the 2021 PFS Rule and beginning on January 1, 2021, scheduled increases to outpatient primary care services require significant budget neutrality cuts across the entire PFS, cuts that land particularly hard on frontline providers, our members.

Emergency physicians, hospitalists, critical care physicians, infectious disease physicians and skilled nursing facility physicians have been serving the nation since the earliest days of the pandemic, learning how to care for patients infected with a novel pathogen and adapting to meet shifting patient volumes as the infection surged repeatedly throughout the nation. Today, the entire nation is undergoing a surge of COVID-19 infections and our members are being pushed to their limits. Despite this chaos, CMS proposed and finalized a significant change to the PFS and ignored repeated calls to provide flexibility due to the unprecedented pandemic the nation is facing.

While we have long supported and continue to support increasing reimbursement for outpatient evaluation and management (E/M) services, we do not believe it is appropriate for our medical specialties to face significant cuts in the PFS at this time. This year, our members have faced physical danger, financial instability, and rapid, forceful change all while serving the nation and seeing its people through a terrible pandemic. Throughout the year, our members have been referred to as heroes in the pandemic and we wholeheartedly agree with that sentiment. However, Medicare's recently finalized PFS rule rewards those healthcare heroes with a significant pay reduction. **We urge Congress to act now to prevent these damaging cuts from going into effect next year.**

Our organizations and our members stand ready to work with Congress and the Administration on creating a Medicare payment system that fairly and appropriately reimburses physicians of all specialties for their work. We thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Society of Hospital Medicine
AMDA- The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
American College of Emergency Physicians
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Society of Critical Care Medicine