

January 11, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
United States House of Representatives
418 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

On behalf of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), alongside the 40 undersigned osteopathic specialty and state associations collectively representing more than 186,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, we write to urge Congress to pass legislation to reverse the 3.37% Medicare physician payment cuts that went into effect on January 1, 2024.

Failure to reverse these cuts threatens the viability of physician practices and their ability to care for patients, with the risk of fundamentally altering the care delivery landscape in the United States. While the annual payment cuts and uncertainty impact all physicians, it disproportionately affects DOs and the patients we serve. Despite being 11% of physicians in the United States, DOs comprise 40% of physicians practicing in medically underserved areas. Moreover, the sustainability of independent physician practices is foundational to ensuring adequate patient access to primary care services in rural and underserved communities. Analysis of Medicare Trustees data found that inflation-adjusted Medicare payments to clinicians have decreased by 26% from 2001-2022, and the impact will only become more severe as payment cuts are compounded by CMS' estimated 4.6% increase in practice costs for 2024.¹

Physicians are the only Medicare providers that received a payment cut for 2024. In fact, every other provider in the Medicare payment ecosystem receives annual inflationary payment updates. The FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act included an extension to the Medicare sequester that will add \$2.2 billion to the Medicare Improvement Fund - a sum that is more than enough to offset the reversal of physician payment cuts without adding to the federal deficit and would constitute a significant improvement to physicians' ability to deliver care to their patients.

Efforts by members of Congress to address this issue, including a Dear Colleague letter signed by over 200 members in December, demonstrate that this is a bipartisan, bicameral issue that must be addressed. We urge Congress to work in a bipartisan manner, to quickly pass legislation reversing the entire 2024 Medicare physician payment cuts, to ensure our nation's physicians and seniors continue to provide and have access to care when and where it is needed.

Sincerely,

American Osteopathic Association
American Academy of Osteopathy
American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Internists

¹ Analysis of Medicare Trustees and CBO Reports: [Medicare Updates Compared to Inflation](#).

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Page 2

American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists
American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine
American Osteopathic College of Anesthesiologists
American Osteopathic College of Occupational and Preventive Medicine
American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American Osteopathic College of Radiology
American Osteopathic Colleges of Ophthalmology & Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

Delaware State Osteopathic Medical Society
Florida Osteopathic Medical Association
Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association
Idaho Osteopathic Physicians Association
Illinois Osteopathic Medical Society
Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association
Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine
Louisiana Osteopathic Medical Association
Maine Osteopathic Association
Michigan Osteopathic Association
Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
New Mexico Osteopathic Medical Association
New York State Osteopathic Medical Society
New Hampshire Osteopathic Association
North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association
Oklahoma Osteopathic Association
Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of California
Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Associations
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Utah Osteopathic Medical Association
Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association
Washington Osteopathic Medical Association
West Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association

cc: The Honorable Ron Wyden, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Mike Crapo, Ranking Member Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Jason Smith, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Richard Neal, Ranking Member, House Committee on Ways and Means