



December 8th, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

Re: Comments and Recommendations on Importance of Averting 2022 Medicare Cuts

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

On behalf of the more than 168,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students represented by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and undersigned specialty and state osteopathic associations and the patients they serve, we write to express our strong support for the passage of the legislation to eliminate the combined Medicare payments cuts of 9.75% which are set to take effect starting January 1st, 2022. These cuts include the 4% statutory 'Pay-As-You-Go' (PAYGO) requirement, the additional 3.75% budget neutrality payment cut, as well as a 2% sequestration cut.

Our organizations are grateful for Congress' past action to defer Medicare payment cuts in recognition of the economic toll that COVID-19 has had on physician practices. Unfortunately, our nation is still grappling with the pandemic and physicians are contending with its effects.

Even with the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine, physician practices continue to face overwhelming financial challenges and pressures associated with higher overhead costs. This includes, but is not limited to, new investments in infrastructure, increased personal protective equipment (PPE), and other essential medical supplies necessary to safely vaccinate and treat patients, in addition to the ever-growing concern of finding and retaining high quality staff. Allowing these cuts to take effect in 2022, while the pandemic is still straining the healthcare

system would be detrimental to physicians' ability to care for their patients. Financial challenges relating to the pandemic have been especially difficult for small physician practices in rural and underserved communities and reinforces why ensuring stability and predictability for physicians and their patients is so essential. Allowing these cuts to take effect would further strain Medicare beneficiaries access to care in rural and underserved communities and across the country.

To better understand the financial effect of the pandemic on physicians, the AOA conducted a nationwide survey of practicing DOs last year. Of those who participated in the survey, 95% of physicians experienced a decline in practice revenue due to COVID-19, and more than 40% experienced a revenue reduction greater than 50%. The essential takeaway is that physicians across all specialties are struggling to keep their practices open due to increased expenses and reductions in revenue as a direct result of the pandemic. If these Medicare cuts are allowed to take effect, it would dramatically impact osteopathic physicians and the patients whom they serve. DOs make up 11% of all physicians in the United States, however, they comprise 40% of the physicians practicing in medically underserved areas.

We greatly appreciate your leadership and the work that Congress has done to support our nation's recovery from this pandemic, and we urge you to facilitate the timely passage of legislation that will provide much needed stability for physicians and the patients they treat and prevent potential disruptions in access to care. If you have any questions or if our organizations can be a resource, please contact AOA Senior Vice President of Public Policy, David Pugach, at dpugach@osteopathic.org or (202) 349-8753.

Sincerely,

American Osteopathic Association

Advocates for the American Osteopathic Association

American Academy of Osteopathy

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

American College of Osteopathic Internists

American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists

American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians

American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics

American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine

American Osteopathic College of Anesthesiologists

American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

American Osteopathic College of Radiology

Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association

Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association

Association of Military Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons

Colorado Society of Osteopathic Medicine

Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society

Idaho Osteopathic Physicians Association
Illinois Osteopathic Medical Society
Indiana Osteopathic Association
Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association
Kentucky Osteopathic Medical Association
Louisiana Osteopathic Medical Association
Maine Osteopathic Association
Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians
Massachusetts Osteopathic Society
Michigan Osteopathic Association
Minnesota Osteopathic Medical Society
Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
New Hampshire Osteopathic Association
New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
New York State Osteopathic Medical Society
North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Oklahoma Osteopathic Association
Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association
Rhode Island Society of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Wisconsin Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons