

December 11, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
235 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi,

The undersigned surgical organizations urge Congress not to include Medicare cuts that could threaten patient access to quality care in the tax bill, an end of the year spending package, or other legislation.

We understand the challenge of identifying offsets and appreciate the bipartisan work to advance the Medicare extenders, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and other legislation to improve access to care. However, we are particularly concerned that the Medicare extenders package identifies an extension of the mis-valued code target recapture policy. The effort to ensure the accuracy of values attributed to services received by Medicare beneficiaries is one to which we are firmly committed. But this is also work that has been ongoing for years and reinstating the target recapture policy in the future would likely result in across-the-board cuts given that much of the revaluation that the policy seeks has already occurred or is currently being addressed.

Additionally, we have serious concerns about the cumulative effect of further Medicare sequestration cuts beyond the current two percent cuts through 2025. We are also concerned about those that could be triggered by the tax legislation should Congress not waive the PAYGO violation. These concerns are especially acute at a time when physicians have just begun participation in the Merit-based Incentive Payment System and other aspects of Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act.

Our organizations remain committed to working with Congress toward needed reforms to Medicare and our health care system in order to improve patient access to surgical care. We urge you to support our shared commitment to preserving access to care for Medicare patients by not compounding existing cuts to Medicare with an extension of the mis-valued code target recapture or expansion of Medicare sequestration cuts.

Sincerely,

American College of Surgeons
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons

American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Society for Vascular Surgery
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
The American Society of Breast Surgeons
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons