

UPDATE

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Neurosurgeons Thank Members of Congress for Leading Efforts to Avoid Steep Medicare Cuts in 2022

A bipartisan group of 247 representatives urges House leaders to take action this year.

Washington, DC—Today, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) thanked Reps. **Ami Bera**, MD, (D-Calif.) and **Larry Bucshon**, MD, (R-Ind.) for leading a [Congressional letter](#) to House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** (D-Calif.) and Republican Leader **Kevin McCarthy** (R-Calif.) urging them to take action this year to prevent steep Medicare physician payment cuts in 2021. A bipartisan group of 247 members of Congress from 49 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands signed the letter.

Neurosurgical care faces overall payment cuts of more than 9% at a time when the nation’s health care system continues to be stressed by the pandemic. The reductions are partly driven by the expiration of the 3.75% payment adjustment to provide relief during the COVID-19 public health emergency included in last year’s Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. In addition, the moratorium on the 2% Medicare sequestration pay cuts expires at the end of this year, and a 4% Medicare payment cut triggered by the Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 will also take effect in 2022. Congressional action is therefore needed to override these devastating cuts.

“America’s neurosurgeons appreciate the leadership of Reps. Bera, Bucshon and others for their efforts on multiple fronts to prevent these harmful cuts,” said **John K. Ratliff**, MD, FAANS, a practicing neurosurgeon at Stanford University and chair of the AANS/CNS Washington Committee. “Such an overwhelming showing on this letter to House leaders clearly demonstrates significant bipartisan support for Congress to act this year to protect Medicare beneficiaries’ timely access to care,” Dr. Ratliff added.

The letter to leadership highlights that the current Medicare payment system does not adequately incentivize high-quality care and points out that payments have failed to keep up with inflation. The lawmakers stressed that it would take additional time for policymakers to begin the complex process of identifying and considering potential long-term reforms to speed the transition to value-based care. The letter underscores that Congress “must also create stability by addressing the immediate payment cuts facing health care professionals” as “these cuts will strain our health care system and jeopardize patient access to medically necessary services.”

As founding members of the [Surgical Care Coalition](#), the AANS and the CNS are working to stop these drastic Medicare payment cuts to surgical care.

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit www.aans.org or www.cns.org, read our blog www.neurosurgeryblog.org, follow us on [Twitter](#) or connect with us on [Facebook](#).