

UPDATE

# neurosurgery

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 19, 2020

**Contact:**

Katie O. Orrico, Esq.  
(703) 362-4637

[korrico@neurosurgery.org](mailto:korrico@neurosurgery.org)

**Neurosurgeons Thank Members of Congress for Leading Efforts to Avoid Steep Medicare Cuts in 2021**

*A bipartisan group of 229 representatives urges Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy 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.); **Larry Bucshon**, MD, (R-Ind.); **Brendan F. Boyle** (D-Pa.); **George Holding** (R-N.C.); **Raul Ruiz**, MD, (D-Calif.); **Roger W. Marshall**, MD, (R-Kan.); **Abby Finkenauer** (D-Iowa); and **Brad Wenstrup**, DPM, (R-Ohio) 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 229 members of Congress from 47 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands — including a majority of members on the Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees, which have jurisdiction over Medicare — signed the letter.

Neurosurgeons face overall payment cuts of at least 7% at a time when the nation’s health care system is already stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The reductions are primarily driven by new Medicare payment policies for office and outpatient visits that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will implement on Jan. 1, 2021. Drastic cuts caused by changes to these visit codes — also known as evaluation and management (E/M) codes — will undermine patient access to neurosurgical care.

“America’s neurosurgeons appreciate the leadership of Reps. Bera, Bucshon and others for their efforts on multiple fronts to prevent these harmful cuts,” said **Ann R. Stroink**, MD, FAANS, a practicing neurosurgeon from Bloomington, Illinois, 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. Stroink added.

As founding members of the [Surgical Care Coalition](#), the AANS and the CNS are working to stop these planned Medicare payment cuts. A recent survey conducted by the coalition found that neurosurgical practices face severe financial distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before the CMS cuts take effect, the survey found that:

- More than one-half (54%) of respondents are concerned that they could be forced to shut down their practice, limiting choice and access to neurosurgical care;
- Three-quarters (74%) of neurosurgeons are concerned about the finances of their practice, and to keep the doors open, 38% have cut their own salary, and one-quarter (24%) have taken on debt as a result of COVID-19; and
- In the face of declining revenues, 86% of respondents are worried that they will have to cut employee’s salaries and 76% fear that they may have to permanently layoff employees.

###

*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](http://www.aans.org) or [www.cns.org](http://www.cns.org), read our blog [www.neurosurgeryblog.org](http://www.neurosurgeryblog.org), follow us on [Twitter](#) or connect with us on [Facebook](#).*