

April 9, 2025

The health care system has changed dramatically in recent years and the compounding effects are negatively impacting patient access to care and the patient-physician relationship. These changes include significant consolidation of both insurance companies and of hospital and healthcare systems. Additionally, there are reports of Medicare Advantage gaming the system and diverting resources from patient care. All of this is happening while physicians are seeing steadily increasing clinical practice expenses exacerbated by reduced Medicare reimbursement that threatens the viability of practices.

Given the rapid nature of these changes, we are at an inflection point. Continuing to perpetuate the broken physician payment system will likely be the death knell for the ability of physicians to sustain clinical practices. This will only further ensure control of the health care system by large corporate entities such as insurers and health systems without appropriate competition, resulting in continued erosion of the patient-physician relationship.

Our organizations call on Congress and the administration to:

- 1. Preserve and strengthen patient access to high quality health care for all Americans.**
- 2. Take initial steps now to address the broken Medicare physician payment system by adding an annual payment adjustment based on the Medicare Economic Index (MEI) and reform the budget neutrality requirements which have caused significant problems for the Medicare physician payment system over the years.**

While not all-encompassing, these initial steps are needed to bring stability to the health care system. These steps would also protect patient access to high quality care and patient choice while preserving the patient-physician relationship and physician autonomy.

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American Academy of Ophthalmology
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American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
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