

November 23, 2022

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
United State House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

The undersigned national organizations, who share the goal of supporting small physician practices in the Medicare program who serve beneficiaries in rural locations, health professional shortage areas, and medically underserved areas, request your support via the inclusion of the *SURS Extension Act*, H.R. 6576, in an end-of-year legislative package.

This critical legislation extends an important technical assistance program known as the Quality Payment Program-Small Underserved, and Rural Support (QPP-SURS) program, which provides support to practices who participate in Medicare value-based payment initiatives. This assistance was critical to ensuring that small practices in rural and underserved areas had the support and tools necessary to succeed in the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) program. However, after five years of support, QPP-SURS ended in February 2022. This has left clinicians without a direct technical assistance program to help them navigate the continuously changing regulations and increasing performance thresholds of the QPP.

In addition, payment reform programs are complex, and clinicians require supplemental resources and guidance to meet the substantial quality and cost containment aspirations of payment models. This is particularly true for small practices that qualify for QPP-SURS. Practices that fail to meet the MIPS performance threshold could be penalized up to nine percent, which is a significant financial impact for providers that often serve high-need, high-cost patients in underserved areas.

Although MIPS has been scaled back since 2019 due to COVID-19, participation requirements will again be in full effect starting on January 1, 2023. The expiration of the QPP-SURS assistance program coupled with looming Medicare payment cuts, jeopardizes patient access to care. Restarting this technical assistance program at this time would be beneficial to patients in these medically underserved communities and valuable to small and rural physician practices.

We would appreciate your support in pushing Congress to include H.R. 6576 in an end-of-year legislative package. If you have any questions, or if the AOA can be a resource, please contact AOA Vice President of Public Policy, John-Michael Villarama, MA, at Jvillarama@osteopathic.org or (202) 349-8748.

Sincerely,

American Osteopathic Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Neurology
American Association of Clinical Urologists
American College of Physicians

American Gastroenterological Association
American Medical Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Anesthesiologists