

December 11, 2023

The Honorable Greg Murphy, MD
United States House of Representatives
407 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Danny Davis
United States House of Representatives
2159 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup, DPM
United States House of Representatives
2335 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta
United States House of Representatives
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Burgess, MD
United States House of Representatives
2161 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Larry Bucshon, MD
United States House of Representatives
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Murphy, Davis, Wenstrup, Panetta, Burgess, and Bucshon:

On behalf of our physician and medical student members, the American Medical Association (AMA) writes in strong support of H.R. 6683, the “Preserving Seniors’ Access to Physicians Act,” bipartisan legislation that blocks another round of damaging Medicare payment cuts. Absent Congressional intervention, Medicare payments will be reduced by 3.37 percent on January 1, 2024, due to budget neutrality requirements within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ (CMS) Calendar Year (CY) 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule. Physicians cannot continue to endure a cycle of increasing practice costs and decreasing Medicare payment rates. We commend your leadership in introducing legislation that eliminates this forthcoming cut, in full.

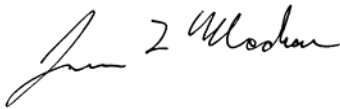
Unfortunately, physician practices are struggling because Medicare payment has barely budged over the last two decades, increasing just nine percent from 2001 to 2023, or just 0.4 percent per year on average. Part of this increase is attributable to a 2.5 percent update that Congress provided physicians for twelve months following the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (CAA 2023). This update, however, expires at the end of this year, leaving physicians with insufficient resources to treat Medicare patients. In fact, the cost of running a medical practice has increased 47 percent between 2001 and 2023, or 1.7 percent annually. When adjusted for inflation in practice costs, Medicare physician payment has *declined* 26 percent from 2001 to 2023, or by 1.3 percent per year on average. Although the CY 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule final rule estimates that the cost of running a practice, as measured by growth in the Medicare Economic Index, will increase 4.6 percent, the agency is still subjecting physicians to a 3.37 percent cut next year. *Even more alarming is the fact that the 3.37 percent reduction accounts for the separate 1.25 percent statutory increase the CAA 2023 authorized for 2024.*

As a result, it is imperative that Congress expeditiously pass H.R. 6683 and block the 3.37 percent payment cut in 2024, as these payment reductions will only accelerate and exacerbate the looming access

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Page 2

to care crisis. Stopping this impending cut will also send a clear signal to America's physicians and patients that federal lawmakers are committed to preserving the Medicare guarantee of access to care for our nation's seniors who rely on it, while they work to enact broader reforms to the Medicare payment system in 2024. The AMA is proud to support H.R. 6683, and we stand ready to work with leaders in the House and Senate to enact this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L. Madara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: The Honorable Charles Schumer
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Mike Johnson
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Mike Crapo
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
The Honorable Frank Pallone
The Honorable Jason Smith
The Honorable Richie Neal