

May 17, 2023

The Honorable Raul Ruiz, MD
United States House of Representatives
2342 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Ami Bera, MD
United State House of Representatives
172 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mariannette Miller-Meeks, MD
United States House of Representatives
1034 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Ruiz, Bucshon, Bera, and Miller-Meeks:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and the 31 undersigned osteopathic specialty and state associations, which collectively represent more than 178,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and medical students, write to express our support for H.R. 2474, the *Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act*. This legislation would apply a permanent inflation-based adjustment to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) conversion factor, which would provide stability to providers delivering essential care to Medicare beneficiaries and help to ensure that patients have access to timely and high-quality care.

While Congress has taken action to temporarily mitigate additional MPFS cuts, this temporary measure still amounts to a 2% payment reduction for physicians in 2023. While payment uncertainty impacts all physicians, it disproportionately affects DOs and the patients they serve. Despite being 11% of physicians in the United States, DOs comprise 40% of physicians practicing in medically underserved areas. Independent physician practices are foundational to ensuring adequate patient access to primary care services in underserved communities. Analysis of Medicare Trustees data found that inflation-adjusted Medicare payments to clinicians have decreased by 26% from 2001-2022.

As physicians continue to struggle with rising practice costs and other economic factors, any payment reduction jeopardizes their practice viability, and patients' access to timely, comprehensive care. Year-over-year payment reductions due to sequestration and budget-neutral policies, alongside the failure of the MPFS to account for the rapidly increasing costs of providing care underscore the need for Congress to invest in a more sustainable Medicare physician payment system. Securing an annual inflationary update to the MPFS would provide clarity and security to physician practices and access to care to the communities they serve.

The *Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act* would provide transformative stability to the Medicare payment system, and we applaud your leadership on this essential issue. 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 College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists
American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians
American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine
American Osteopathic College of Anesthesiologist
American Osteopathic College of Occupational and Preventive Medicine
American Osteopathic College of Radiology

Alabama Osteopathic Medical Association
Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society
Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association
Iowa Osteopathic Medical Society
Louisiana Osteopathic Medical Association
Maine Osteopathic Association
Massachusetts Osteopathic Society
Minnesota Osteopathic Medical Society
Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
New Mexico Osteopathic Medical Association
North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Oklahoma Osteopathic Association
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Utah Osteopathic Medical Association
Wisconsin Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons