



January 2, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I write to urge Congress to swiftly take action to stop the Medicare cuts that took effect on January 1st and prevent potential disruptions in patient care by providing payment stability for physicians. We are very concerned that the 3.4 percent across-the-board cut to physician payment this year will have serious consequences on patients' access to care and health outcomes. By enacting legislation to support payment stability, Congress will be helping to improve the health and well-being of patients enrolled in Medicare and bolstering the physician workforce.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 161,000 internal medicine physicians, related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and compassion to the preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

For years physicians across the nation have struggled with a broken Medicare payment system that does not allow them to keep up with rising practice expenses and the cost of providing care. Unlike nearly every other segment of the Medicare payment system, the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) does not include annual inflationary adjustments. When accounting for inflation, current Medicare physician payment rates have decreased by a staggering 26 percent since 2001. This broken, inadequate payment system is not sustainable and is a contributing factor to the physician workforce shortage. The impact of this is being felt across the country with patients struggling to secure medical appointments, often having to wait for months to see their physicians.

The reality is even more concerning for primary care. For many patients, particularly in underserved and rural communities, their primary care physicians are often the only physicians that they see. A recent [report](#) from the Primary Care Collaborative highlights the worsening physician shortage facing this country, with every state seeing a reduction in primary care physicians, per capita. Across the country, primary care physicians are retiring or leaving the field, and there are not enough new medical residents in primary care to make up for that loss. Should this trend continue, the impact it would have on



American College of Physicians
Leading Internal Medicine, Improving Lives

population health would be dire as evidence [shows](#) that access to primary care can reduce mortality and improve health outcomes.

We need Congress to act now to ensure that patients have access to care and support the physicians who care for them. **This is why ACP strongly endorses H.R. 6683, the Preserving Seniors' Access to Physicians Act of 2023.** We commend Representatives Murphy (R-NC), Davis (D-IL), Wenstrup (R-OH), Panetta (D-CA), Bucshon (R-IN), and Burgess (R-TX), for introducing this important legislation, which would eliminate the 3.4 percent conversion factor reduction that has already gone into effect January 1st of this year. **The College urges Congress to move quickly on passing H.R. 6683.**

Should you have any questions on this legislation or on future legislation and hearings, ACP stands ready to offer the perspective of internal medicine clinicians. Please contact Vy Oxman, Senior Associate of Legislative Affairs, at 202-261-4515 or via email at voxman@acponline.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Omar Atiq".

Omar T. Atiq, MD, MACP

President

CC:

Representative Gregory Murphy
Representative Danny Davis
Representative Brad Wenstrup
Representative Jimmy Panetta
Representative Larry Bucshon
Representative Michael Burgess