

December 5, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

As organizations representing the majority of the nation's physicians, we write to express our strong opposition to proposals that would eliminate the Medicaid primary care payment increase that was recently finalized in a final rule issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and scheduled to be implemented on January 1.

Elimination of this policy further burdens the already challenged Medicaid system of today. Patients will face obstacles to connecting with a patient-centered medical home and will be forced to rely on episodic, acute care services provided in other settings, foregoing the more cost-effective coordinated and preventive care services that primary care physicians provide. Policies aimed at improving access to physicians in the Medicaid program are strongly supported by our organizations because we understand that investments such as these lead to better quality of care for patients and decreased costs for state governments.

The Medicaid payment increase ensures that Medicaid payments for eligible physician services in all states are no less than Medicare, independent of whether a state has chosen to participate in the Medicaid expansion authorized by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). By doing so, it will improve access to care for persons enrolled in both the existing Medicaid program and persons who may become newly eligible for Medicaid in states that accept the federal dollars to expand Medicaid.

Over the past few years, our nation has taken significant steps towards improving access to health care for the uninsured and underinsured. A principal part of this effort has been the investment in primary care as the foundation of our nation's health care system. Expanding access to physicians, especially primary care physicians, is a priority for federal and state governments, as well as commercial insurance plans. Private and public health care systems are making this investment as a means of improving access to health care for patients and as a means of improving the overall quality and efficiency of care provided.

Our members are dedicated to working individually and collectively to ensure that all patients, including low-income working families who depend on Medicaid, have access to needed primary care services. However, many physicians do not participate in the Medicaid program due to poor payment rates that, historically, are well below the actual costs of providing care. This results in reduced access to care for the most vulnerable patients and higher costs to federal and state governments.

Although a principal goal of this Medicaid policy is to improve access to primary care, the policy also increases payments to many subspecialists in internal medicine and pediatrics, with the purpose of increasing participation and access to their services.

A key to achieving our joint goals of ensuring increased access and improved quality is ensuring that Medicaid and Medicare payment policies are aligned with the access and quality goals established by public and private health care systems. The Medicaid payment increase is an important policy that

attempts to better align payment rates with cost of care for primary care physicians, thus increasing access to primary care physicians for millions of Medicaid patients.

We urge you to oppose elimination of the Medicaid primary care payment increase.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
AMDA - Long Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American College of Allergy Asthma and Immunology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians
American College of Physicians
American College of Rheumatology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Pediatric Society
American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Infectious Disease Society of America
Joint Council of Allergy Asthma and Immunology
MEDNAX National Medical Group
National Physicians Alliance
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America
Pediatrix Medical Group
Renal Physicians Association
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Society for General Internal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of Hospital Medicine
The Endocrine Society

Medical Association of the State of Alabama
Alabama Academy of Family Physicians

Alabama Chapter, American College of Physicians
Alabama Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Alaska State Medical Association
Alaska Chapter, American College of Physicians
Alaska Osteopathic Medical Association

Arizona Medical Association
Arizona Academy of Family Physicians
Arizona Chapter, American College of Physicians
Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association
Arizona Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Arizona Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

Arkansas Medical Society
Arkansas Academy of Family Physicians
Arkansas Chapter, American College of Physicians
Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

California Medical Association
California Academy of Family Physicians
California Chapter, American College of Physicians
Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of California
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics
California Chapter 2, American Academy of Pediatrics
California Chapter 3, American Academy of Pediatrics

Colorado Medical Society
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
Colorado Chapter, American College of Physicians
Colorado Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Colorado Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Connecticut State Medical Society
Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians
Connecticut Chapter, American College of Physicians
Connecticut Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Delaware Academy of Family Physicians
Delaware Chapter, American College of Physicians
Delaware State Osteopathic Medical Society
Delaware Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Medical Society of the District of Columbia
District of Columbia Academy of Family Physicians
District of Columbia Chapter, American College of Physicians
District of Columbia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Florida Medical Association
Florida Academy of Family Physicians
Florida Chapter, American College of Physician
Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Florida Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Medical Association of Georgia
Georgia Academy of Family Physicians
Georgia Chapter, American College of Physicians
Georgia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Hawaii Medical Association
Hawaii Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons

Idaho Medical Association
Idaho Academy of Family Physicians
Idaho Osteopathic Medical Association
Idaho Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois State Medical Society
Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
Illinois Chapter, American College of Physicians
Illinois Chapter of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Indiana Academy of Family Physicians
Indiana Chapter, American College of Physicians
Indiana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Iowa Medical Society
Iowa Academy of Family Physicians
Iowa Chapter, American College of Physicians
Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association
Iowa Chapter of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Iowa Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Kansas Medical Society
Kansas Academy of Family Physicians
Kansas Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Kentucky Medical Association
Kentucky Academy of Family Physicians
Kentucky Chapter, American College of Physicians
Kentucky Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Louisiana State Medical Society
Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians
Louisiana Osteopathic Medical Association
Louisiana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Maine Medical Association
Maine Chapter, American College of Physicians
Maine Osteopathic Association
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

MedChi-The Maryland State Medical Society
Maryland Academy of Family Physicians
Maryland Chapter, American College of Physicians
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Massachusetts Medical Society
Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians
Massachusetts Chapter, American College of Physicians
Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Michigan State Medical Society
Michigan Academy of Family Physicians
Michigan Chapter, American College of Physicians
Michigan Association of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Michigan Osteopathic Association
Michigan Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Minnesota Medical Association
Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians
Minnesota Chapter, American College of Physicians
Minnesota Osteopathic Medical Society
Minnesota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Mississippi State Medical Association
Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians
Mississippi Chapter, American College of Physicians
Mississippi Osteopathic Medical Association
Mississippi State Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Missouri State Medical Association
Missouri Academy of Family Physicians
Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons
Missouri Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Montana Medical Association
Montana Academy of Family Physicians
Montana Chapter, American College of Physicians
Montana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Nebraska Medical Association
Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians
Nebraska Chapter, American College of Physicians
Nebraska Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Nevada State Medical Association

New Hampshire Medical Society
New Hampshire Academy of Family Physicians
New Hampshire Chapter, American College of Physicians
New Hampshire Osteopathic Association
New Hampshire Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Medical Society of New Jersey
New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians
New Jersey Chapter, American College of Physicians
New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Medical Society of the State of New York
New York Chapter, American College of Physicians
New York State Osteopathic Medical Society
New York Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics
New York Chapter 2, American Academy of Pediatrics
New York Chapter 3, American Academy of Pediatrics

New Mexico Medical Society
New Mexico Academy of Family Physicians
New Mexico Chapter, American College of Physicians
New Mexico Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

North Carolina Medical Society
North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians
North Carolina Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
North Carolina Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

North Dakota Medical Association
North Dakota Academy of Family Physicians
North Dakota Chapter, American College of Physicians
North Dakota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Ohio State Medical Association
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Ohio Chapter, American College of Physicians
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Ohio State Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Oklahoma State Medical Association
Oklahoma Osteopathic Association
Oklahoma Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Oregon Medical Association
Oregon Academy of Family Physicians
Oregon Chapter, American College of Physicians

Pennsylvania Medical Society

Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians
Pennsylvania Chapter, American College of Physicians
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Family Physicians Society
Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Rhode Island Medical Society
Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians
Rhode Island Chapter, American College of Physicians
Rhode Island Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Puerto Rico Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

South Carolina Medical Association
South Carolina Academy of Family Physicians
South Carolina Chapter, American College of Physicians
South Carolina Osteopathic Medical Society
South Carolina Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

South Dakota State Medical Association
South Dakota Academy of Family Physicians
South Dakota Chapter, American College of Physicians
South Dakota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Tennessee Medical Association
Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians
Tennessee Chapter, American College of Physicians
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association
Tennessee State Society of Osteopathic Family Physicians

Texas Medical Association
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Texas Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Texas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Utah Medical Association
Utah Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Vermont Medical Society
Vermont Academy of Family Physicians
Vermont State Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons
Vermont Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Medical Society of Virginia
Virginia Academy of Family Physicians
Virginia Chapter, American College of Physicians
Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association
Virginia Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Washington State Medical Association
Washington Academy of Family Physicians
Washington State Chapter, American College of Physicians
Washington Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

West Virginia State Medical Association
West Virginia Academy of Family Physicians
West Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association
West Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Wisconsin Medical Society
Wisconsin Chapter, American College of Physicians
Wisconsin Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Wyoming Medical Society
Wyoming Chapter, American College of Physicians
Wyoming Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

cc: United States Senate