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July 24, 2024

The Honorable Mike
Johnson Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem
Jeffries Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) is the world's largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals, with over 40,000 members. The AAN's mission is to enhance member career fulfillment and promote brain health for all. A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating, and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system. These neurological conditions affect over one in three people worldwide and include Alzheimer's disease, stroke, concussion, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, headache, migraine, and more.

We are writing today to ask that Congress act as soon as possible to fix the 2.8 percent cut to physician reimbursement included in the proposed 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS). This cut to the conversion factor is the result of expiring provisions in the 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act and Congressionally mandated requirements that the MPFS be budget neutral. CMS cannot address this cut without Congressional action, so it is imperative that Congressional leadership begin the process to address the cut before it goes into effect on January 1, 2025.

This will compound the effects of years of mandatory cuts to the MPFS, making it more difficult for seniors to access the care they need. Rising inflation coupled with decreased reimbursements will make it harder for physicians to maintain their practices and retain staff, forcing many providers to close their doors or move to higher-paying locations. This will disproportionately affect seniors in rural and underserved areas, where lower pay already contributes to a shortage of physicians.

This problem will be acutely felt by seniors with neurologic conditions. The population of Americans eligible for Medicare is expected to double to 95 million

by 2060¹, and a dramatic rise in neurodegenerative disease is also expected with incidence of stroke rising 20% by 2030², prevalence of Parkinson's disease doubling by 2040³, and the incidence of dementias doubling by 2050⁴. A recent study published in *Neurology*[™] found that nearly 1 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries traveled over 50 miles one way to receive neurologic care⁵. If Congress once again allows Medicare reimbursement to decrease it will become even more difficult for seniors to receive quality and timely neurologic care.

In order to ensure seniors continue to have access to neurologic care, we urge Congress to act as soon as possible to fix the proposed 2.8% cut to the MPFS. We also urge Congress to continue their work to find long-term solutions to avoid this cycle of cuts in the MPFS, including adjustments to the budget neutrality triggers and an automatic inflationary update to physician reimbursement under Medicare.

As you set the agenda for the remaining legislative days this Congress, we ask that you prioritize fixing this cut. We look forward to working with you on this issue, as well as broader structural reforms to the MPFS. If you have any questions, please contact Max Goldman, Director of Congressional Affairs, at mgoldman@aan.com.

Sincerely,



Carlayne E. Jackson, MD, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology

¹ <https://www.prb.org/resources/fact-sheet-aging-in-the-united-states/>

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23697546/>

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23436720/>

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25984581/>

⁵ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37704403/>

