

Protect Patient Access to Care by Supporting H.R. 2474, the Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act, and H.R. 952, the Kids' Access to Primary Care Act

Issue: Ensure that payment for medical care is sufficient to support and improve patient access to care.

Why Action is Needed

Medicare beneficiaries' access to care is increasingly being put at risk by a flawed payment system. Medicare payment rates to physicians for care they provide to America's older adults have not just failed to keep up with inflation for more than 20 years but have actually been cut on an annual basis in recent years. In addition to a lack of inflationary updates, each year physician practices face arbitrary payment cuts due to budget neutrality requirements in the annual fee schedule that, unless addressed in a comprehensive way, will continue to plague physicians in the years to come. These flawed policies are contributing to staffing shortages and service limitations that potentially result in longer wait times or other disruptions impacting patient care.

Legislation is needed to help preserve access to care for Medicare beneficiaries and improve the financial stability of physician practices by providing the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) with annual inflationary updates. In 2015, Congress passed the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) creating a new physician payment model designed to reward physicians based on the value of care provided to patients and offer incentives for physicians to practice in value-based alternative payment models. There remains, however, growing concern that MACRA has fallen short of its intended goals.

ACP's Position

We continue to [urge](#) Congress to ensure that the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) provides physicians with positive and stable payment updates consistent with the Medical Economic Index (MEI) that adequately reflect the increased costs in their practice due to inflation. This is essential to physicians' ability to make needed investments in their practice that help ensure they can continue delivering high quality care to their patients.

Additionally, Medicaid continues to be a crucial source of care for many of our patients, including children and pregnant and postpartum individuals. However, under Medicaid, on average, a clinician treating a Medicaid enrollee is paid about two-thirds of what Medicare pays for the same services and only half of what is paid by private insurance plans. The *Kids Access to Primary Care Act* would use Medicare rates as the floor for Medicaid payment rates for primary care services.

Call to Action

- Cosponsor and pass **H.R. 2474, the Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act**, which preserves access to care for Medicare beneficiaries by providing an annual inflation update equal to the Medicare Economic Index (MEI) for Medicare physician payment.
- Cosponsor and pass **H.R. 952, the Kids' Access to Primary Care Act**, which aligns Medicaid reimbursement rates with Medicare payments for primary care services.