

February 26, 2024

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

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

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

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

RE: To Support Patients, Help Our Doctors

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Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell,

As representatives of the nation's patient community, we are writing to express our unified concern that doctors today are grappling with serious challenges, which in turn dangerously compromise patient access to quality care.

Specifically, we write to recognize the financial strain doctors across America are experiencing due to a variety of conflating factors, including inflation and the burdensome administrative tasks they are forced to juggle each day. On top of rising costs and payer red tape, physicians experienced a 3.37 percent cut to Medicare payments effective January 1<sup>st</sup>. This cut will further strain the long-term viability of physician practices and the sustainability of our nation's healthcare system – unless Congress steps in immediately.

Our healthcare system relies on the commitment and expertise of doctors who keep our communities healthy. Like any business, they need to keep their doors open, but physicians have weathered cut after cut that have cumulated into a whopping 30% cut between 2001 and 2024, according to the American Medical Association.

As a result, many doctors' offices may no longer accept new patients or may cut back on services just to stay operational in the face of these cuts, rising expenses, and an increasingly strained workforce. Worst of all, we fear some practices may stop taking Medicare beneficiaries or close altogether. Small and independent practices, particularly those operating in rural and underserved areas, will likely feel these cuts most acutely.

Continuing down this path is unsustainable and unfair to America's healthcare workforce. Dedicated health professionals deserve fair reimbursement for their hard work, especially considering their vital role in our society and our care.

Congress must help patients by supporting the medical professionals we rely on and trust. As a first step, lawmakers should retroactively reverse the latest cuts implemented at the beginning

of this year. Furthermore, policymakers should work to implement comprehensive Medicare payment reform that fairly compensates doctors rather than propagating policies that indiscriminately chip away at the critical foundation of care frontline physicians provide for Americans every day.

Addressing these issues will provide the stability doctors need to continue providing care without the undue financial burdens they currently bear. As patients who have witnessed and benefited from the exceptional care provided by our local doctors, we urge you to champion policies that prioritize fair and competitive compensation for physician care.

Our nation's doctors have always advocated for us – their patients. It is time that we join forces and advocate for them, too. Patients and families across America depend on your leadership to make a meaningful difference.

Sincerely,

AliveAndKickn  
Association of Mature American Citizens  
Avery's Hope  
Center for Medicine in the Public Interest  
Cervivor  
Colon Cancer Coalition  
Connecting Pieces  
Free2Care  
Global Campaign for Cancer Survivorship  
International Foundation for Arthritis  
Nevada Chronic Care Collaborative  
One Cancer Place  
Patients Rising  
People with Empathy  
Practicing Physicians of America  
RetireSafe  
Right Scan, Right Time  
Say Yes to Hope  
Stronger Than Sarcoidosis  
Support Fibromyalgia Network  
The Akari Foundation  
The Blue Hat Foundation  
The Patient Helpline  
The Steffens Scleroderma Foundation