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Physicians Urge Comprehensive Medicare Payment Reform, Applaud Health Provisions in Omnibus

Washington, D.C. (January 11, 2023) – The end-of-year omnibus package included important health provisions but fell short of fully resolving the Medicare payment challenges physicians face. On behalf of the nearly 600,000 physicians and medical students our organizations represent, we strongly urge the 118th Congress to address outdated Medicare physician payment so that patients can access the high-quality care they deserve, and physicians have the resources and flexibility they need.

While the omnibus package mitigated 6.5% of Medicare payment cuts originally slated to take effect this year, physicians still face a 2% reduction in the 2023 Medicare conversion factor. Physicians are struggling with rising practice costs, and any payment reduction jeopardizes their practice viability and patients' access to timely, comprehensive care. The annual threat of Medicare payment cuts underscores the critical need for Congress to invest in a more sustainable Medicare physician payment system – which is the only Medicare payment system lacking an annual inflationary update.

Although the omnibus did not adequately support physicians' ability to care for their patients, it did include several provisions that will help Americans have timely access to care. This includes protecting patients' access to virtual care via the extension of Medicare telehealth flexibilities, including continued coverage of audio-only services. Additionally, we support enabling states to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage for a full year and securing continuous health care coverage for children enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP for 12 months.

While we are also pleased to see inclusion of provisions to support the mental health of Americans, including investments in Medicare's Graduate Medical Education program that will facilitate training for additional new physicians in specialties that are in short supply, we are ready to work with Congress to further address the mental health crisis in our country.

We urge members of Congress to prioritize comprehensive Medicare payment reform this year and look forward to working with them to advance meaningful policies to improve health outcomes and access to care.

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About the American Academy of Family Physicians

Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 127,600 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the largest medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits — that's 192 million visits annually or 48 percent more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America's underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP's positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit www.aafp.org/media. For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP's award-winning consumer website, www.familydoctor.org.

About the American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. For more information, visit www.aap.org and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.

About the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) is the nation's leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of more than 62,000 members, ACOG strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women's health care. www.acog.org.

About the American College of Physicians

The [American College of Physicians](http://www.acponline.org) is the largest medical specialty organization in the United States with members in more than 145 countries worldwide. ACP membership includes 160,000 internal medicine physicians, related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Follow ACP on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ACP), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ACP), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ACP).

About the American Osteopathic Association

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) represents more than 178,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students; promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. To learn more about DOs and the osteopathic philosophy of medicine, visit www.osteopathic.org.

About the American Psychiatric Association

The American Psychiatric Association, founded in 1844, is the oldest medical association in the country. The APA is also the largest psychiatric association in the world with more than 37,400 physician members specializing in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and research of mental illnesses. APA's vision is to ensure access to quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. For more information, please visit www.psychiatry.org.