

November 12, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The COVID-19 global health pandemic remains unprecedented in both the scale and scope of its impact, and the response by the government and health care community to this crisis has been similarly unparalleled. The reality of the current situation is clear – it will be at least several months before life begins to return to “normal,” and the pandemic will continue to place financial stress on our nation’s health care system, threatening the viability of those serving the most vulnerable communities. It is for this reason that we ask Congress to extend the current moratorium on the Medicare sequestration cuts, which are scheduled to return January 1, 2021, until the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The decisive action taken by Congress to date has averted disastrous impediments to care for the American people, but emerging trends in both infection and hospitalization rates signal that the worst is not yet behind us. October and November saw record setting daily infections, with over 100,000 new cases reported nationally in a single day and total reported cases surpassing 10 million. These infection rates signal renewed stress on our health care system as we enter the winter months with the virus more likely to spread from indoor transmissions. This upsurge in cases also has impacted the financial health of medical professionals and facilities, including the increased cost of labor to ensure adequate staffing, procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), significant reductions in patient volume resulting from orders to cancel non-emergent procedures, and the high cost of caring for COVID patients.

The moratorium on the Medicare sequester included in *The CARES Act* was a clear acknowledgement of the important role that Medicare reimbursement plays in the financial wellbeing of our health care system. While Congress does not have the power to end the pandemic, it does have the ability to prevent the additional, damaging financial stress that would be caused by the return of the Medicare sequester. We urge you to take action before the end of the 116th Congress to prevent the return of the Medicare sequester until the end of the public health emergency.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Community Health Plans
Ambulatory Surgery Center Association
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association for Homecare
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Physicians
American Medical Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Optometric Association
American Physical Therapy Association
America's Essential Hospitals
America's Health Insurance Plans
America's Physician Groups
AMGA
Association of American Medical Colleges
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Federation of American Hospitals
Healthcare Leadership Council
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
Premier healthcare alliance
Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association
Vizient, Inc.