

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to request that you urgently address the 3.37 percent cut to Medicare payments that went into effect on January 1, 2024. Failure to address these cuts will threaten the continued ability of physicians and other healthcare providers to care for their patients.

We in Congress must continue our partnership with the healthcare provider community to ensure that Medicare patients retain access to quality care. The United States is experiencing a critical shortage of physicians and healthcare providers. Estimates highlight a projected shortfall of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034¹ and a shortfall of up to 73,310 allied health professionals by 2036². A major contributing factor to this unfortunate reality is our Medicare physician payment system, which has failed to maintain physician reimbursement at levels that adequately incentivize high-quality care.

After three consecutive years of Medicare payment reductions, healthcare providers are at a breaking point and are struggling to maintain access to care for the Medicare beneficiaries they treat. Facing a nearly 10 percent reduction in Medicare payments over the past four years, rising practice costs, workforce shortages, and financial uncertainty resulting from the pandemic, some practices are already limiting the number of Medicare patients they see, or the types of services offered. It is anticipated that these cuts will be felt hardest by smaller, independent practices, like those in rural and underserved areas that continue to face significant health care access challenges.

On behalf of patients and healthcare workers, Congress must urgently work together with the provider community to come up with long-term legislative solutions to reform the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA). These efforts are critical to supporting patients' access to high-quality Medicare-covered services and bolstering our healthcare workforce. Specifically, we must ensure its intended goal of shifting towards value-based care is fulfilled.

In the interim, the most important step that Congress can take to create stability in the Medicare program is to address the cut to Medicare payments. We as policymakers must ensure that

¹ <https://www.aamc.org/media/54681/download?attachment>

² <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/data-research/projecting-health-workforce-supply-demand>

healthcare providers who treat Medicare patients continue to have the necessary financial support to care for our nation's seniors.

We appreciate your attention to this critical matter and look forward to working together on this issue.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Roger Marshall
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



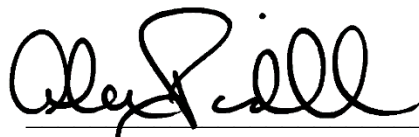
Susan Collins
United States Senator



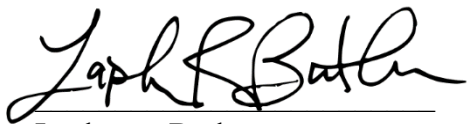
Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



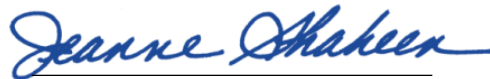
Laphonza Butler
United States Senator



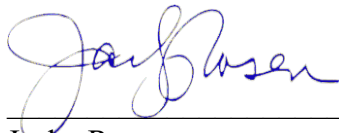
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



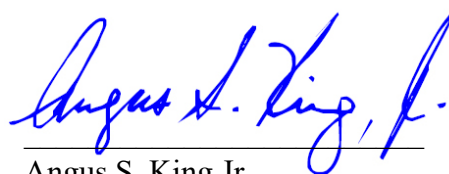
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



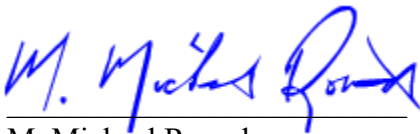
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



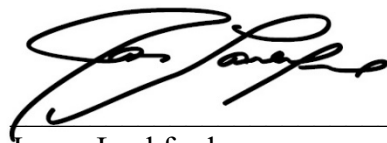
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



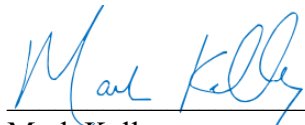
Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



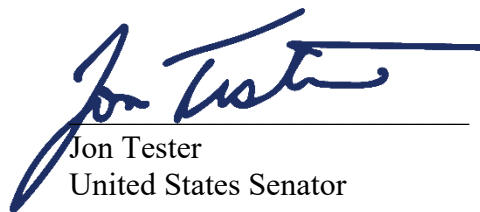
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Chris Coons
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



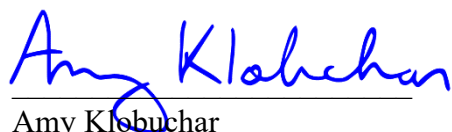
Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



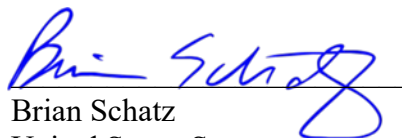
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



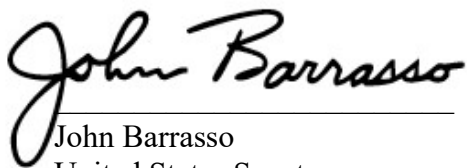
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator


John Barrasso
United States Senator


Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator


Jack Reed
United States Senator


Gary Peters
United States Senator