

STOP MEDICARE PAYMENT CUTS TO PROTECT ACCESS TO AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES

ACTION REQUESTED

Stop Medicare Part B payments and pass sustainable reforms to ensure beneficiary access to audiology and speech-language pathology services.

ISSUE: Medicare Part B Payment Cuts Reduce Beneficiary Access to Services Provided by Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists

An increasing number of audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) report real practice impacts resulting from inadequate Medicare reimbursement rates, according to ASHA member survey data. In 2023, 19% of surveyed members reduced clinical staff positions and 6% restricted the number of patients seen from Medicare

Medicare Part B payment cuts on multiple fronts continue to negatively impact the ability of Medicare providers to ensure adequate access to care, especially in rural and lower income areas. This includes statutory pay-as-you-go (PAYGO), budget sequestration, the multiple procedure payment reduction (MPPR), and conversion factor (CF) cuts in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS).

The gap between provider payment rates and rising practice costs will also continue to widen considerably, especially in the absence of an annual inflationary payment update—the MPFS is the only Medicare payment system without an annual adjustment for inflation—and a long-term, comprehensive reform of the payment system. Adjusted for inflation, payments under the MPFS have effectively declined 26 percent from 2001 to 2023.

ASHA supports both short and long-term reforms to stabilize Medicare payments and ensure beneficiary access to services that will lower health care costs. These include:

- Fully reversing future cuts related to CF reductions;
- Enacting H.R. 2474, the Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act, which adds an annual inflationary update to Medicare payments;
- Eliminating the 2% payment cuts related to sequestration; and
- Prevent payment cuts related to statutory PAYGO.

SOLUTION: Tell Congress to Stop Medicare Part B payment cuts and pass sustainable reforms to the Medicare provider payment system.

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