



SPECIALTY DOCS REJECT MEDPAC PROPOSAL TO CUT MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENTS FOR SPECIALISTS
Note Unequal Treatment with Primary Care

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Washington, DC – The Alliance of Specialty Medicine repudiated a potential framework put forth by MedPAC to reduce Medicare reimbursements to specialists by 5.9% per year for three years, while freezing the reimbursement rate for primary care physicians.

“This proposal simply devalues the expertise and critical care that specialists provide to Medicare patients and will further restrict access to care for them,” said Dr. Alex Valadka, a neurosurgeon from Austin, TX and spokesperson for the Alliance.

The MedPAC framework was unveiled as part of a plan to reform the Medicare reimbursement system, known as the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR), with recommended offsets. Under the proposed framework, Congress would repeal the SGR and replace it with a ten-year path of statutory updates. Primary care services’ reimbursement rates would be frozen over the next ten years and all other services would be reduced by 5.9% per year for three years and then followed by a freeze in reimbursement rates for the remaining seven years.

“The failure of the SGR is not the fault of physicians, and doctors should not be required to pay for its repeal essentially through cuts to ourselves,” Valadka added.

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine vowed to fight these recommendations, which won’t be finalized by MedPAC until early October. The Alliance highlighted the fact that physicians are already facing a series of reductions and penalties in the aftermath of the recently passed health care reform law and are likely facing additional cuts resulting from the upcoming deliberations of the Joint Committee on the Deficit.

“There comes a point where if you keep cutting specialists’ reimbursements, we can’t maintain our practice, keep our doors open and employ staff,” Valadka continued. “The end result of that means we can’t properly take care of our most vulnerable patients.”

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