

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Thune and Leader Schumer,

The undersigned national orthopaedic specialty organizations and state orthopaedic societies urge Congress to prioritize Medicare physician payment reform in any upcoming reconciliation package. Together, our members proudly care for nearly half of all U.S. adults and three in four seniors affected by musculoskeletal diseases.¹ However, they now face a critical crossroads, as relentless Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) cuts and rising practice costs threaten patient access to care.

We were deeply disappointed when both the American Relief Act of 2025 and the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act of 2025 excluded a bipartisan agreement to prevent the harmful 2.83% Medicare physician payment cut that took effect on January 1. In fact, physician reimbursement under Medicare has decreased by at least 33% since 2001 when adjusted for inflation, leaving practices struggling to keep their doors open while providing care to an aging population with increasingly complex medical needs. Without congressional action, Medicare beneficiaries' timely access to musculoskeletal care—particularly in rural and underserved areas—will be at risk.

With this year's cut already impacting physician practices, reconciliation may be our last chance to enact the sweeping, long-term MPFS reforms needed to protect seniors' access to high-quality care. We urge you to work with leadership to ensure any forthcoming package addresses this urgent need by:

1. Including an immediate update to mitigate the impact of the 2.83% cut for 2025
2. Stabilizing the MPFS in the longer-term through structural reforms, such as tying the conversion factor to practice cost inflation as measured by the Medicare Economic Index (MEI) and raising the threshold for budget neutrality adjustments.

Without these reforms, physicians will continue to be arbitrarily singled out as the only segment of the healthcare system that does not receive an inflation-based reimbursement update. The resulting financial instability undermines physicians' ability to invest in patient care and keep their practices viable. We cannot afford to let this opportunity slip away—now is the time to enact lasting solutions that ensure Medicare remains strong for both patients and practitioners.

¹ <https://www.ors.org/burden-of-disease/#:~:text=Musculoskeletal%20diseases%20affect%20more%20than,four%20age%2065%20and%20over>

We appreciate your leadership on this issue and urge you to take decisive action in the reconciliation process to address these critical challenges.

Sincerely,

American Association for Hand Surgery
American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons
American Society for Surgery of the Hand Professional Organization
Arthroscopy Association of North America
Cervical Spine Research Society
Limb Lengthening and Reconstruction Society
Musculoskeletal Infection Society
Musculoskeletal Tumor Society
North American Spine Society/National Association of Spine Specialists
Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Association
Orthopaedic Research Society
Orthopaedic Trauma Association
Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America
Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society
The American Orthopaedic Association
The Gladden Society
The Hip Society
The Knee Society