



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

November 30, 2017

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member, House Ways & Means Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal:

The undersigned organizations of the Alliance of Specialty Medicine (the Alliance), a coalition of medical specialty societies representing more than 100,000 physicians and surgeons, **write to express our deep concern with the misvalued code offset provision included in the Medicare extenders package released on November 15.** While we appreciate the difficulty in obtaining appropriate offsets for this critical legislation, this offset unduly impacts specialty physicians. We also object to any expansion of the Medicare budget sequester beyond 2022 or possible additional cuts that could result from PAYGO violations.

The Alliance is very appreciative of the dedication of the congressional committees with Medicare jurisdiction in crafting end of the year legislation to address Medicare extenders and other key health items. Previously, we have expressed concerns about the misvalued code provisions, particularly since the work to identify potentially misvalued services is ongoing through the American Medical Association's (AMA) Relative Value System Update Committee (RUC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The vast majority of physician services have been reviewed, resurveyed, and revalued, over the course of the last few years. Indeed, these ongoing efforts have squeezed value out of most specialty codes to the point where the target set by Congress cannot be met, resulting in reductions in the annual conversion factor for all physicians for the three consecutive years since passage of the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act (P.L. 113-295). When added to the annual two percent sequestration cut, we believe this provision is detrimental to the Medicare program and risks inappropriately undervaluing physician services and threatening patient access to care. The Alliance, therefore, urges its elimination.

The Alliance hopes to work with you to achieve an end of the year package of key health provisions that does not include extending the misvalued codes provision.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Mohs Surgery
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urological Association
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
National Association of Spine Specialists