

UPDATE

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Neurosurgeons Join Chorus of Physician and Dental Groups Calling for Repeal of Medicare Board

Unelected board has the power to cut billions of dollars from Medicare limiting seniors' access to care

Washington, DC – The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) joined more than 35 physician and dental groups [urging](#) Congress to repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) by supporting passage of H.R. 849, the Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act when it comes to the House floor for a vote on Nov. 2. This legislation, with nearly 270 bipartisan supporters, is cosponsored by Representatives Phil Roe, MD (R-Tenn.), and Raul Ruiz, MD (D-Calif.), and would repeal the IPAB.

The IPAB was created by the Affordable Care Act and is a board of 15 unelected and largely unaccountable government bureaucrats whose primary purpose is to cut Medicare spending — a mission that will discourage the long-term, structural improvements to the nation's health care delivery system. Even worse, if IPAB fails to report recommendations or never becomes operational, this power will rest solely in the hands of a single person — the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Moreover, the IPAB sets a dangerous precedent by implementing changes while circumventing the regular legislative process.

Earlier this year, the AANS and CNS also joined the [Physician IPAB Repeal Coalition](#), the [Alliance of Specialty Medicine](#) and more than [800 health care stakeholder organizations](#) in endorsing this legislation. In addition, according to recent estimates by the Medicare Trustees in its [2017 Annual Report](#), in the near future IPAB could be triggered; thus setting up a process that will result in billions of Medicare cuts.

“Leaving Medicare payment decisions in the hands of an unelected, unaccountable governmental body whose only goal is to arbitrarily cut Medicare spending will negatively affect timely access to quality health care for seniors,” said Ann R. Stroink, MD, FAANS, a neurosurgeon from Bloomington, Ill. and chair of the AANS/CNS Washington Committee.

Dr. Stroink added, “Neurosurgeons recognize that we must continue to address inefficiencies in our health care system, but the IPAB is simply the wrong solution for addressing these budgetary challenges. Rather, Congress should allow Medicare's valued-based quality payment programs work to improve health care quality and drive down Medicare costs, and repeal IPAB once and for all.”

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit www.aans.org or www.cns.org or www.neurosurgeryblog.org.