



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

March 25, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman,
Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member,
Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman,
Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member,
Energy and Commerce Committee

RE: CMS Proposed Medicare Part B Drug Payment Model

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Levin, Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone:

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance) is a coalition of national medical specialty societies representing more than 100,000 physicians and surgeons. We are dedicated to the development of sound health care policy that fosters patient access to the highest quality specialty care.

Appropriate Medicare coverage of and reimbursement for treatments are critical for patients suffering from chronic, debilitating, or rare conditions. This is why the undersigned members of the Alliance of Specialty Medicine are very concerned about the Medicare Part B Drug Payment Model proposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on March 8. This type of initiative will adversely affect the care and treatment of patients. As specialty physicians who will be directly affected by this payment experiment, we urge you to work with CMS to ensure that the proposed rule is withdrawn.

Our patients need immediate access to the right medication for their condition. Many of them already face complexities in their care and treatment options, and they should not face mandatory participation in an initiative that may force them to switch from their most appropriate treatment for financial reasons. Under this proposed payment model, patients would be forced to navigate a CMS initiative that could potentially lead to a halt in their ongoing treatment. This is not the right way to manage the Medicare program for any beneficiary – let alone patients with serious conditions.

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

These types of initiatives should be implemented in a targeted, patient-centered, and transparent way that accounts for the unique needs of beneficiaries. The nationwide scope of the proposed model, and the unilateral way in which CMS has formulated it, make this development extremely disconcerting to practicing specialists who prescribe Part B medications.

Diseases requiring specialty care are formidable enemies, and it is disheartening when our patients have to fight CMS in addition to their debilitating conditions. We urge you to ensure that our nation's oldest and sickest patients can continue to access the most appropriate drugs and services. Please ask CMS to permanently withdraw the Part B Drug Payment Model from consideration.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Mohs Surgery
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
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Congress of Neurological Surgeons
North American Spine Society
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

Cc: Members, House of Representatives