



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

December 6, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 2051

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

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 urge that any end of the year spending package or other legislation not extend the misvalued code target recapture or include any expansion of the Medicare budget sequester beyond 2022 or possible additional cuts that could result from PAYGO violations.** While we appreciate the difficulty in obtaining appropriate offsets for this critical legislation, these particular offsets unduly impacts specialty physicians.

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 target recapture, 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 hopes to work with you to achieve an end of the year package of key health provisions that does not include extending the misvalued code target recapture.

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