

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, vascular surgery is under the threat of a proposed 7% cut in Medicare payment rates scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2021. The CMS is implementing drastic payment cuts to surgeons and other practitioners due to Medicare's budget neutrality requirements that mandate spending offsets for the payment increases CMS is implementing for primary care office Evaluation and Management (E/M) visits.

The apex of a pandemic is no time to make drastic cuts in payment for any physicians, particularly surgeons, many of whom contributed as first and second wave responders, and lost significant amounts of income from the prohibitions on elective procedures in the early days of COVID-19.

We have only a short window of 6-8 weeks to stop these cuts from being implemented. Our most urgent priority is to get Congress to block these cuts *and* restore fairness to the fee schedule. We need the leadership of the House and Senate to agree on waiving the budget neutrality requirements for the E/M payment increases and require CMS to incorporate the E/M office visit payment increases into the global surgical packages. Unfortunately, in this election year there are few legislative vehicles to attach a waiver and little time to accomplish this.

Therefore, we are urging every member of SCVS, SVS, VESS, APDVS, and AVF, to join in a unified advocacy effort to contact your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators to request immediate action in September to waive Medicare budget neutrality requirements for the new office visit payment provisions and apply the payment increases to the global surgical packages.

Please go to the SVS website at <https://vascular.org/news-advocacy/advocacy/voter-voice-contact-congress> to send a prewritten message to your lawmakers requesting that they sign on letters to their Congressional leadership urging immediate Congressional action in September to stop the proposed Medicare physician payment cuts. We may have only shot at impacting this, and now is the time!

In addition to the unceasing efforts of the SVS Government Relations Committee and Policy and Advocacy Council, the SVS Political Action Committee (PAC) is also very engaged in this effort and is working closely with SVS members to increase opportunities to engage with Congressional leaders at local, virtual events as we work to stop the Medicare payment cuts. A robust SVS PAC is one of our key advocacy tools to mobilize on issues such as the Medicare payment cuts and effectively represent our interests on Capitol Hill. You can find more information about the PAC at www.svspac.org.

Thank you in advance for your support for our advocacy efforts. Only by working together can we make a significant difference!

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