

February 28, 2022

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

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our appreciation for the bipartisan enactment of *The Protecting Medicare and American Farmers from Sequester Cuts Act* in December 2021, which extends the suspension of Medicare sequestration cuts, pursuant to *The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*. Suppressing sequestration has provided critical relief in our ongoing battle against COVID-19 and its variants, including Omicron, and enabled health care providers across the country to continue serving their patients and communities. We respectfully request, therefore, that Congress revisit the extension's prescribed structure under which sequestration payment reductions will soon resume, and instead extend the full 2% Medicare sequester moratorium for the duration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress has ensured that frontline health care providers have the resources necessary to keep our doors open to care for both COVID and non-COVID patients alike. While we are encouraged that the worst days of the Omicron variant are hopefully behind us, it is also abundantly clear that daily COVID infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths remain exceedingly high. Though we strive towards learning to live with COVID in an endemic state, it is likely premature to declare victory over the pandemic.

On February 18, President Biden renewed the COVID-19 National Emergency declaration beyond March 1, 2022, writing that "more than 900,000 people in this Nation have perished from the disease, and it is essential to continue to combat and respond to COVID-19 with the full capacity and capability of the Federal Government." Along those lines, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has recently indicated that the COVID-19 PHE will likely be renewed for an additional 90 days beyond the current expiration date in April 2022.

The Protecting Medicare and American Farmers from Sequester Cuts Act authorized a three-month delay of 2% Medicare sequester payment reductions (January 1, 2022 - March 31,

2022), followed by a three-month, 1% reduction in Medicare sequester payment reductions (April 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022). The resumption of the Medicare sequester before the end of the PHE would unnecessarily hinder our caregiving abilities, especially when the emergence of a new, potentially more dangerous and/or contagious variant continues to loom.

Consequently, we urge you to extend the current 2% Medicare sequester moratorium for the duration of the COVID-19 PHE, and to take action before April 1 when sequestration is scheduled to resume. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Academy of Doctors of Audiology
Ambulatory Surgery Center Association
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American Association for Homecare
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Physicians
American College of Radiology
American College of Surgeons
American Medical Association
American Medical Group Association
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Nurses Association
American Optometric Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
America's Essential Hospitals
America's Health Insurance Plans
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists
Better Medicare Alliance

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
Brain Injury Association of America
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Diabetes Technology Access Coalition
Federation of American Hospitals
Healthcare Leadership Council
LeadingAge
Medical Group Management Association
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association for the Support of Long Term Care
Outpatient Ophthalmic Surgery Society
Premier healthcare alliance
Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association
Vizient, Inc.