

RADIOLOGY BUSINESS

FOR LEADERS NAVIGATING VALUE-BASED CARE

Radiology among 74 medical groups pressing politicians to protect providers from ‘devastating’ pay cuts



Marty Stempniak

Seventy-four medical associations this week implored Congress to enact legislation, providing radiologists and other docs with pay bumps to offset “devastating” Medicare cuts set to take hold on Jan. 1.

Those signing the letter included the Radiology Business Management Association, American College of Radiology, and SNMMI among many others. They’re asking House members to pass the “Holding Providers Harmless from Medicare Cuts During COVID-19 Act,” introduced by physician lawmakers last week.

“This critical legislation recognizes the importance of allowing significant scheduled pay increases to primary care and others who primarily provide [evaluation and management] services to take effect while also avoiding the devastating corresponding cuts for physician and nonphysician providers that will occur because of Medicare’s budget neutrality requirements,” doc groups wrote to Reps. Ami Bera, MD, D-Calif., and Larry Bucshon, MD, R-Ind., and others who sponsored the bill, on Nov. 11. “Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to halt the implementation of any payment reductions that could inadvertently limit patient access to care as well as further exacerbate the financial instability of healthcare provider practices.”

HR 8702, as it’s called for short, would provide clinicians with temporary additional payments covering the difference between 2020 and 2021 reimbursement for two years. The feds have long planned to significantly boost pay for outpatient E/M care beginning next year. But that requires roughly 10% reductions to others who do not bill for such services, in order to balance the budget.

A recent survey from RBMA found that 50% of radiology practices plan to reduce staffing if the changes move forward. And imaging giant RadNet estimated over the summer that it stands to lose \$11 million in 2021 revenue if Congress fails to take action.

“Any Medicare payment cuts can only worsen the financial instability of healthcare provider practices already reeling from the pandemic and limit patient access to potentially lifesaving care,” Howard Fleishon, MD, chairman of the ACR’s board of chancellors, said in a statement issued Thursday.

Others signing the letter included the American Society of Neuroradiology, Society of Interventional Radiology, the American Society for Radiation Oncology and the Association for Quality Imaging. You can read the letter in its entirety [here](https://www.radiologybusiness.com/topics/healthcare-economics/radiology-74-medical-groups-medicare-pay-cuts-covid-19).

Source URL: <https://www.radiologybusiness.com/topics/healthcare-economics/radiology-74-medical-groups-medicare-pay-cuts-covid-19>