

June 1, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Chairman
Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin, Ranking Member
Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: H.R. 1190, the “Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act”

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Levin,

On behalf of the undersigned medical organizations, representing 450,000 physicians and the patients they serve, we urge you to pass out of committee H.R. 1190, the “Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act.” Created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the IPAB is a government board whose sole job is to cut Medicare spending, and this bill will repeal this deleterious provision of the ACA.

From the beginning of Medicare, members of Congress have played an essential role in shaping policies that best meet the needs of their communities and constituents to ensure that the healthcare system is equipped to care for diverse populations across the country. With the advent of the IPAB, however, the people’s elected representatives will no longer have power over Medicare payment policy. Instead, these major health policy decisions will rest in the hands of 15 unelected and largely unaccountable individuals. Even worse, if IPAB fails to report recommendations or never becomes operational, this power will rest solely in the hands of a single individual — the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, fewer than half of the IPAB members can be healthcare providers, and none is permitted to be practicing physicians or be otherwise employed. Thus, not only does the creation of IPAB severely limit congressional authority, but it essentially eliminates the transparency of hearings, debate, and a meaningful opportunity for critical stakeholder input.

While we recognize the need to reduce the federal budget deficit and control the growth of healthcare spending, the IPAB is simply the wrong solution for addressing these budgetary challenges. We need a workable alternative that adequately reimburses physicians and ensures that patients will have timely access to quality care. Leaving Medicare payment decisions in the hands of an unelected, unaccountable body with minimal congressional oversight will negatively affect timely access to quality healthcare for our country's senior citizens and individuals with disabilities.

We thank you for advancing this important legislation. We look forward to working with you to ensure that it becomes law.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Specialty Medicine
American Academy of Dermatology Association

American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Mohs Surgeons
American College of Radiology
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Breast Surgeons
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Echocardiography
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Urological Association
Cardiology Advocacy Alliance
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Heart Rhythm Society
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Vascular Surgery
Society of Gynecologic Oncology

cc: Members, U.S. Ways and Means Committee