

November 30, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
United States Capitol, Room S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
United States Capitol, Room S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

We are writing to urge the Senate to join the House in voting to repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) before the end of the year.

There is a broad and growing bipartisan consensus, in Congress and across the states, that IPAB must be repealed. Sens. John Cornyn and Ron Wyden have both introduced legislation this year to repeal IPAB; these bills are now co-sponsored by a total of 51 senators representing both parties. Further, the final FY 2017 omnibus spending bill agreed on in May eliminated funding for IPAB, and both chambers' FY 2018 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations proposals eliminate this funding as well.

IPAB's inherent danger exists in its composition and its mission. It would be entirely comprised of individuals appointed by the President with no Senate confirmation. This Board would be charged with developing proposals to reduce Medicare spending. In other words, IPAB's structure allows the future of Medicare to be determined by these few unelected bureaucrats, breaking a more than 50-year precedent of Medicare decisions being made by Congress.

Additionally, IPAB is required to implement proposed spending cuts rapidly, often within a year. Under this constricted timeline, IPAB is more likely to consider short-term savings in the form of payment cuts for health care providers instead of constructive, long-term reforms.

Older adults already experience barriers to care because low reimbursement rates mean an increasing number of physicians are unable to accept new Medicare patients. Short-sighted IPAB cuts will exacerbate access issues and weaken the policies and programs established to improve care and the quality of life for older adults.

IPAB's proposed changes to Medicare are mandatory and would automatically become law unless Congress passes legislation cutting an equal amount from Medicare. This would circumvent legislators' authority to create and oversee health policy. Our patients expect and deserve accountability from government institutions, but IPAB is accountable to no one.

As advocates for older adults, we work to protect beneficiary access to the essential care provided by Medicare. There are many ways to improve the American health care system, but IPAB is the wrong approach. On behalf of more than 50 million Medicare beneficiaries, we urge you to protect older adults' access to quality care by repealing IPAB this year.

Thank you,

Aging Life Care Association®
Alliance for Aging Research
American Society on Aging
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Association for Home Care and Hospice
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Silver Haired Congress