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December 10, 2020

The Honorable John Boozman
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Tom Cotton
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
U.S. Senate

Dear Senators Boozman, Collins, Cotton, Cramer, and Hyde-Smith:

On behalf of the more than 82,000 members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), I would like to express our support for the *Holding Providers Harmless From Medicare Cuts During COVID-19 Act of 2020*. This bipartisan legislation would provide a critical lifeline to surgeons facing drastic Medicare payment cuts beginning in January 2021.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) calendar year (CY) 2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) final rule affirmed new policy changes that are detrimental to surgeons and surgical patients. Starting January 1, 2021, CMS plans to increase the payment levels for stand-alone office and outpatient E/M codes, which will result in payment cuts to surgeons and other physicians due to statutory requirements for budget neutrality under the MPFS.

With CMS's planned physician payment cuts for surgical services, patients who rely on Medicare for their medical treatment may encounter issues with accessing care, while further impacting the financial health of physicians and their practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Holding Providers Harmless From Medicare Cuts During COVID-19 Act of 2020* would provide critical relief for two years to surgeons and other health care professionals who are expecting payment cuts beginning January 1, 2021. Without this urgent action, these cuts will have devastating impacts on both Medicare patients and surgeons who are already struggling to keep their practices afloat.

The ACS strongly supports the *Holding Providers Harmless From Medicare Cuts During COVID-19 Act of 2020* and thanks you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working together toward enactment of this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,

David B. Hoyt, MD, FACS
Executive Director

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