SOCIETY OF CARDIOVASCULAR COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY

Talking Points

Voice Opposition to Additional Payment Cuts and Prior Authorization for Medical Imaging Services

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Right now in Washington, the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction is meeting to identify over $1 trillion in budget cuts to reduce the federal budget deficit. Medical imaging is once again a target.

Despite marked evidence of decreased growth in imaging services, some policymakers continue to believe that advanced diagnostic imaging services provided under Medicare should be subject to additional reimbursement cuts. Some lawmakers also back a proposal to require prior authorization of "high cost" imaging services provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

It is crucial that you contact your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators to urge them to reject any effort to impose additional payment cuts or prior authorization for medical imaging services provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

Make sure you convey the following points to your lawmakers:

- Advanced diagnostic imaging services have sustained severe regulatory and legislative payment cuts over the last few years. These services continue to be subject to scrutiny despite the fact that imaging growth is slower than that of most other services under Medicare.

- The volume of advanced diagnostic imaging services provided to Medicare beneficiaries has slowed tremendously, and grew only 0.1 percent between 2008 and 2009.

- Reinforce the fact that medical imaging detects disease early, and therefore saves Medicare program dollars by avoiding delayed diagnoses and the onset of more advanced disease states.

- Make sure your lawmakers understand that prior authorization can serve as an impediment to patient care.

- Explain that experience with private payers suggests that a prior authorization requirement under Medicare would impose a significant burden on the program, increase practice costs, and lead to a delay in timely care or an ultimate denial of necessary services.

- Explain that the focus should be on the provision of appropriate care. Mention the hard work that has been done to develop appropriate use criteria for cardiac computed tomography, cardiovascular magnetic resonance, and cardiac radionuclide imaging . Also note strong support for Congress' enactment of a Medicare demonstration project to test the use of appropriate use criteria

and mandatory imaging laboratory accreditation in the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act.

- Most importantly, convey how continued cuts in medical imaging reimbursement will have a negative impact on patient access to needed imaging services in YOUR community. Let them know what, if any alternatives there will be for your patients.

Contact Your Lawmakers Today

Ask your lawmakers to communicate their opposition to additional cuts and restrictions on imaging services to members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. Members of this Committee are:

> **Senators Max Baucus, John Kerry, Jon Kyl, Patty Murray, Rob Portman, and Patrick Toomey; Representatives Xavier Becerra, Dave Camp, James Clyburn, Jeb Hensarling, Fred Upton, and Chris Van Hollen.**

If your lawmaker is a member of this Committee, ask him/her to work diligently to ensure that this Committee does not unfairly target patients and providers with additional imaging cuts.

If possible, meet with your lawmaker in their District or State office. The time spent on these phone calls and meetings is very important. Please act today!

To contact YOUR U.S. Representative:

- Go to www.house.gov, in the upper left hand corner click the "Write Your Representative" icon

- Submit the information requested and click "Contact My Representative"

- You may write a message to your Representative from this contact page, OR

- Call the Washington, DC office of your U.S. Representative and ask to speak with the health legislative assistant.

To contact YOUR two U.S. Senators:

- Visit www.senate.gov, in the upper right hand corner click the drop down menu to select your state under "Find Your Senators"

- The information for your two U.S. Senators will appear, click the contact form to submit your concerns or simply call the office and ask to speak with the health legislative assistant.

YOUR Voices Count Most! Thank you for taking action today.

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