

News: For Immediate Release

Additional Information Contact:

Gene M. Ransom, CEO

Office: 410-539-0872 x 3305

MEDCHI STATEMENT ON US CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES' SURPRISE BILLING AGREEMENT

BALTIMORE, December 17, 2020 — MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, and Dr. Shannon Pryor, MedChi President, are urging Marylanders to take action to help preserve our physicians ability to continue to provide needed care for their patients and oppose harmful legislation that will make it harder for patients to be treated by their physicians. We are also urging Congress to reject the unfair surprise bill proposal that was just advanced by the House and Senate committees. This is of extreme importance as the country is managing a second surge in COVID-19 cases with many practices not yet fully recovered from the drop in patient visits since the beginning of the pandemic.

Dr. Pryor states, "Congress needs to work with healthcare workers by expanding and improving necessary programs such as the Provider Relief Fund and the Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment Program; expanding the availability of needed personal protective equipment; and increasing funding to help our states from having to make steep cuts to important safety net programs, such as Medicaid. It is also important to prevent extreme cuts to Medicare payment. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is implementing an over 10% decrease to the conversion factor that determines all Medicare payment rates. While the 2021 Medicare payment rule would also provide long-overdue increases in payments for Evaluation and Management codes, CMS will be forced to make cuts to offset these increases. Cuts of this magnitude will inevitably lead to access to care issues for our seniors."

MedChi and Dr. Shannon Pryor urge Congress to ensure that any proposal to address surprise medical bills is fairly balanced and consistent with demonstrated successful laws, rather than one-sided solutions advanced by the market-dominant health insurance industry. The just-announced proposal by 3 House Committees and the Senate HELP Committee could, if enacted, have a significant adverse impact on patient access to essential on-call specialty care in emergency departments across the state, and provide enormous new powers to the health insurance industry to impose steep cuts to their network physicians.

As healthcare workers all across the nation we are facing a second surge of COVID-19 cases, it is a terrible time to disrupt our health care safety net. We ask congress to reject this unfair surprise bill proposal, reject Medicare cuts, and provide our health care system with the resources it needs. Our patients depend upon it and our doctors deserve it. To send a letter to your representatives, please click here - <https://p2a.co/RSOk1KD>.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.