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ASPS ISSUE BRIEF

Repeal of the Independent Payment Advisory Board

Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare

Background

The Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) was created under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010. The board is comprised of 15 appointed members and is tasked to make recommendations to Congress on how to reduce Medicare spending when it exceeds target levels. These recommendations are then considered by Congress under special fast-track rules designed to limit debate. Congress can only reject the Board's recommendations if it enacts policies that produce equal cost savings. Otherwise, the Secretary of Health and Human Services must produce regulations that achieve to the Board's recommended cuts.

IPAB will only be formed if Medicare spending exceeds target growth rates, and because of unusually low medical cost inflation in recent years, the Board has not yet been activated. If initiated, IPAB has the ability to recommend/implement significant cuts to provider reimbursements without ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries receive quality care from skilled providers. Select providers are exempt from the Board's purview, and therefore greater pressure will be placed on cutting Medicare reimbursements for those providers that *can* be hit by IPAB's actions.

Perhaps most troubling, Congress's role in determining Medicare payment policy will be seriously compromised once IPAB is in place. Instead, a board of unelected bureaucrats will have the power to force Congress to implement spending cuts. This system will completely eliminate the transparency provided by Congress, where bills are presented during public hearings and are subject to public debate. IPAB will not provide for stakeholder input beyond its appointed members, and there is far too little clinical representation within that group.

The Solution

We must ensure that adequate systems are in place to provide our seniors with the quality health care that they need and deserve. IPAB threatens that principle and may lead to serious, unintended consequences for both patients and physicians, to draconian cuts that are not subject to sufficient public debate, and to a weakening of the United States Congress as an institution. It is imperative that the Independent Payment Advisory Board is repealed.

Congressional Request

Cosponsor and pass the *Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act* (H.R.1190/S.141) and stop the transfer of congressional responsibility to unelected bureaucrats.