

# Healthcare Advocacy Toolkit



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1 Zotec Way | Carmel, IN 46032 | 317.705.5050

## Overview

This Healthcare Advocacy Toolkit has been crafted to serve as your comprehensive resource for understanding and articulating the critical issues facing healthcare, physicians, and patients today. Whether you are a physician or an industry leader, this toolkit equips you with the insights needed to navigate key discussions.

These challenges include, but are not limited to, the ongoing reductions to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS), the escalating physician shortage, the complexities of Medicaid unwinding, and the urgent need for legislative interventions to secure lasting solutions.

While these issues are multifaceted and demanding, this toolkit is designed to empower you with the knowledge and confidence you need to engage in meaningful discussions and advocacy efforts. We encourage you to reach out if you need further assistance or have any questions. Our team is committed to being a dependable partner and resource, dedicated to protecting the business of healthcare while supporting our clients, prospects, and stakeholders in navigating these complex challenges.



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# Medicare Reimbursement Information

For more context on the Medicare physician fee schedule, check out this [A to ZPAC blog post](#).

In July 2024, the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) released the Calendar Year (CY) 2025 Proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS). This marks the fifth consecutive year that CMS has proposed reductions to Medicare payments, which has significant implications for both physicians and patients.

For 2025, CMS proposes a conversion factor (CF) of \$32.3562, representing a 2.8 percent decrease from the 2024 CF. Despite this 2.8 percent reduction, additional cuts could further impact reimbursement in 2025. Due to the lack of full funding for the American Rescue Plan, the Medicare program would contribute up to 4 percent under the "PAYGO" (Pay as You Go) rules and that cut will come back into the Medicare fee schedule in 2025; Congress has delayed these cuts

twice, in 2022 and 2023.

Additionally, a 2 percent cut due to sequestration, which was delayed during COVID-19 but reinstated on April 1, 2022, poses another threat, as efforts to delay sequestration cuts have been unsuccessful to date. If these PAYGO and sequestration

cuts are not addressed by Congress this year, the worst-case scenario would be an overall decrease of 8.8 percent in 2025.

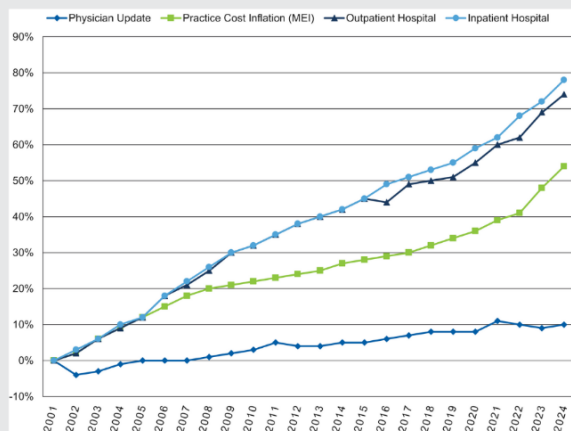
Without intervention from Congress, the current relief measures that provide partial fixes to physician payment will expire at the end of 2024. The proposed rule is currently in its commentary period, which will end in September 2024. CMS is then expected to issue the MPFS 2025 final rule in early to mid-November, with an effective date of January 1, 2025.

To stay informed about the latest developments on the MPFS and other critical healthcare issues, be sure to follow us on [Twitter/X](#) and [LinkedIn](#), and tune into our podcast, [Zotec Answers](#). Zotec will continue to actively advocate on behalf of our clients to minimize the impact of these reductions.

## Medicare physician payment is NOT keeping up with practice cost inflation.

### Medicare updates compared to inflation in practice costs (2001-2024)

Adjusted for inflation in practice costs, Medicare physician payment declined 29% from 2001 to 2024.



Sources: Federal Register, Medicare Trustees' Reports, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Congressional Budget Office.  
Note: Updates from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024 have been incorporated. Updated May 2024

**We need to fix Medicare physician payment NOW.**

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# Advocacy Talking Points

## Medicare and Medicaid

Adjusted for inflation in practice costs, Medicare physician payments have declined by [29 percent](#) from 2001 to 2024.

- For many physicians, the current Medicare payment rate is [lower](#) than it was when they graduated from medical school.

Years of consecutive Medicare cuts are [unsustainable](#), harming patient access to care, diminishing quality of care, and contributing to physician burnout and frustration. In some cases, this has led physicians to retire early, change careers, or leave the profession altogether, with many becoming less likely to recommend the profession to others.

- Seniors, low-income individuals, and those in rural or underserved areas are likely to face the greatest challenges in accessing healthcare.

Physician practices are experiencing rising expenses and decreasing payments at an unsustainable rate.

As of August 23, 2024, at least [25,061,000](#) Medicaid enrollees have been disenrolled nationwide.

- To date, [69 percent](#) of disenrollments have been due to procedural issues.
- This high rate of disenrollment is worrisome because many Americans affected remain eligible for Medicaid but are now without coverage.

## Physician Shortage

The physician shortage is projected to reach [86,000 by 2036](#), according to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). Additionally, a late-August 2024 report by Mercer projects that nineteen states will experience physician shortages by 2028, with Texas, New York, and California being the most affected. The full report is available [here](#).

Impact on Patients:

- A physician shortage of this magnitude will negatively impact patient access to care, increasing wait times for both emergency and ambulatory care settings.
- The quality of care may also be adversely affected.

Impact on Physicians:

- Physicians remaining in the healthcare industry face increased workloads to manage the growing patient demand.

Physicians must see more patients, often resulting in shorter appointment times and an increased number of appointments each day.

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## Importance of Voting

Voting remains the most powerful civic action a U.S. citizen can take to make their voice heard, according to a 2019 Harvard case study promoting civic responsibility. While the presidential election often dominates media coverage, voting down the ballot is incredibly important.

Four members of the Doctors Caucus are retiring at the end of this year:

- Larry Bucshon (R-IN)
- Michael Burgess (R-TX)
- Brad Wenstrup (R-OH)
- Drew Ferguson (R-GA)

As these esteemed lawmakers retire, it is imperative to address the void they will leave in the Doctors Caucus and in Congress. We urge citizens to elect successors who embody the same commitment to healthcare and possess the requisite expertise to navigate its complexities. Identifying candidates with healthcare backgrounds, equipped with firsthand knowledge of patient care and healthcare business, is crucial for ensuring continued progress and advocacy for both physicians and patients alike.



## Key Legislation

Enacting legislation to address the MPFS, the physician shortage, and other critical healthcare issues is essential. Both state and federal legislation play crucial roles. Below are some of the key federal bills we are tracking:

- [U.S. HR 2474](#): Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers
- [U.S. HR 3674](#): Providing Relief and Stability for Medicare Patients Act
- [U.S. HR 6545](#): Physician Fee Schedule Update and Improvements
- [U.S. HR 6683](#): Preserving Seniors' Access to Physicians
- [U.S. S 4935](#): Physician Fee Stability Act

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## What can you do?

### Sign up to become an advocate!

It takes less than a minute, and we will only reach out when it is necessary. You will not receive unnecessary communications – when we do contact you, it will be to address critical issues, whether advocating for or against legislation or encouraging you to alert your legislators about key matters. Becoming an advocate gives you the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on healthcare at the federal, state, and local levels.



### Vote in the 2024 elections!

Voting remains the most powerful civic action a citizen can take to make their voice heard. Before you vote, visit our [Election Center](#) to review who is on your ballot, ensure you are registered to vote, and find your polling place.

### Get involved locally!

Join organizations in your community or state that focus on healthcare issues. Engage with local leaders and keep them informed about the challenges affecting the business of healthcare.

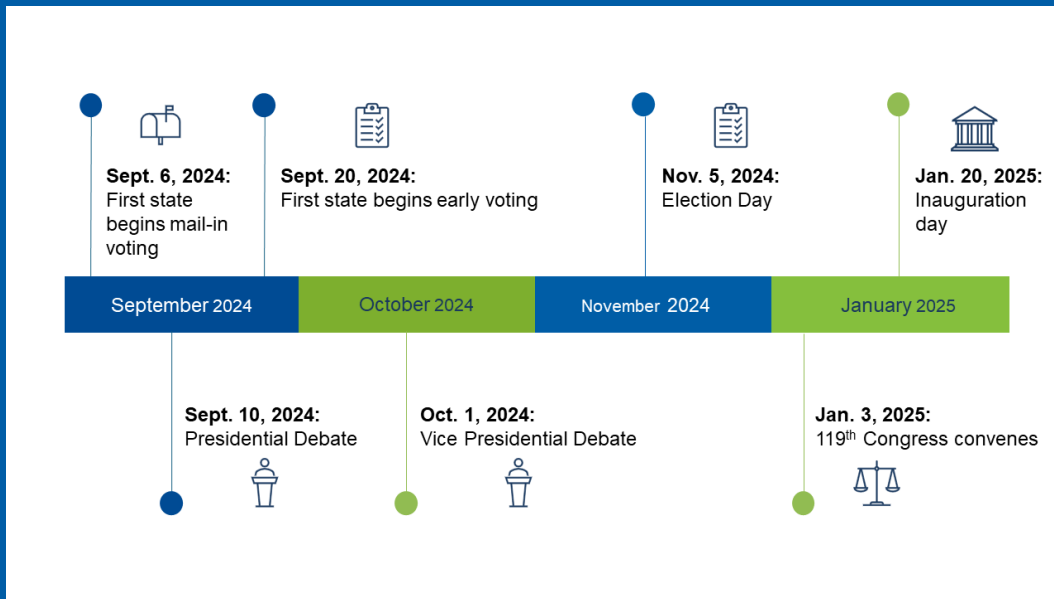
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## Election Resources & Election Center

As you prepare to vote – whether by mail, early voting, or on Election Day – review the key dates below for when absentee ballots are sent and other important deadlines for the November 5, 2024, general election. Use our [Election Center](#) to check your voter registration, see who is on your ballot, and find your polling place.

### Election Timeline



### Election Preparation: When Mail-In Voting Begins, By State

Dates when states begin sending absentee ballots. Rules differ by state. For any states not listed, visit our [Election Center](#) to contact your local election officials.

#### SEPTEMBER

9/6 – NC  
9/11 – AL  
9/16 – KY, PA  
9/19 – WI  
9/20 – AR, MN, NY, SD, VA, WV  
9/21 – ID, IN, LA, NJ, TX  
9/23 – MD, MS, VT  
9/24 – MO  
9/26 – FL, IL, MI, ND  
9/30 – DC, NE

#### OCTOBER

10/4 – CT  
10/6 – NH, MA, ME, SC  
10/7 – CA, GA, OH  
10/8 – NM, WY  
10/9 – AZ  
10/11 – AK, CO, MT  
10/15 – UT  
10/16 – IA, KS, NV, OR  
10/18 – HI, WA

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## Resources

### White Paper – “Is there a doctor in the house?”

- A question, once considered rare and alarming, may soon become a routine inquiry for millions of Americans: Is there a doctor in the house?
- This paper examines the multifaceted issues within the U.S. healthcare system, highlighting the burdens on patients and physicians, and explores broader implications for the future of healthcare.
- Read the full paper [HERE](#).

### Election Center

- Voting is the most powerful civic action a U.S. citizen can take to make their voice heard. Use our Election Center as your go-to resource for all your pre-election needs. Access voting resources, including polling place locators and candidate information, by entering your zip code.
- You can also access the Election Center while in line waiting to vote. Simply text **ZPVote to 50457** and enter your zip code.
- Visit our Election Center [HERE](#) or text **ZPVote to 50457**.

### Zotec Answers Podcast

- Zotec Answers offers timely insights and in-depth analysis from industry leaders on relevant topics such as legislation, policy updates, and regulatory changes, all delivered in a quick and accessible format for busy professionals.
- Never miss another episode; listen and subscribe to Zotec Answers [HERE](#).

### A to ZPAC Blog

- A to ZPAC provides high-level analysis and concise summaries of healthcare policy, legislation, reimbursement, and advocacy, making complex industry topics easy to understand for all readers.
- Read our blog posts [HERE](#).

### Keep up with us on social media:

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Twitter/X](#)

Need talking points or a presentation for an upcoming meeting?  
Reach out to us for additional resources and support.

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