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August 5, 2022

Senator Bill Cassidy
Hart Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Cassidy:

On behalf of the Digestive Health Physicians Association, which represents more than 2,400 gastroenterologists who care for millions of patients in independent GI practices across the country, we are writing to support your amendment, which eliminates a substantial portion of scheduled Medicare payment cuts to physicians and other providers on the physician fee schedule.

We agree that a bill focused on reforming the Medicare program should address a fundamental underlying problem confronting the nation's physicians and their patients – a broken reimbursement system that cuts physician reimbursement and threatens patient access to vital care. We are perplexed that a bill that saves \$260 billion from the Medicare program does not include a provision to block a significant pending cut to provider reimbursement, effective January 2023 at a cost of about \$3 billion. As you know, physicians also confront an indefinite payment freeze for the foreseeable future even after this payment cut is scheduled to go into effect and that is not sustainable since our practice costs continue to escalate every year.

Your amendment would repurpose some of the funds designated to hire bureaucrats to implement the drug pricing provisions to patient care by substantially reducing projected cuts to the providers on the physician fee schedule.

We note that the bill appropriates \$3 billion to administer a program affecting less than 100 drugs by 2031, while the entire CMS budget for 2022 for thousands of hospitals, nursing homes, physicians, home health agencies, Medicare Advantage and prescription drug plans and a host of other providers is just \$3.9 billion. Certainly CMS, can be more efficient in implementing this new program than currently conceived.

We encourage all senators to vote for this amendment and look forward to working with Congress to build on this work by ensuring that the entirety of Medicare cuts are eliminated before their scheduled implementation in January 2023.

Sincerely yours,



Kevin Harlen
Executive Director

cc: Dr. Latha Alaparthy, MD, DHPA President
Howard R. Rubin, DHPA Legal Counsel