

New Coalition Launches to Oppose Medicare Cuts that Hurt Patients and Limit Access to Surgical Care

WASHINGTON, June 18, 2020 – A group of 12 surgical professional associations representing more than 150,000 surgeons announced today the formation of the [Surgical Care Coalition](#) to protect patients, improve their quality of life, and ensure timely access to surgical care. The group's first action is to work with Congress to stop planned cuts to Medicare payments that would hurt patients.

The cuts, planned by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), are set to take place in January 2021 and reduce payments for surgical care. These cuts could force surgeons to see fewer Medicare patients, which would lead to reduced access to care for older Americans and lower their quality of life.

To preserve care for patients, the coalition wants Congress to waive Medicare's budget neutrality requirements to prevent the cuts. This will ensure Medicare patients continue to have the best access—to the best care—when they need it and where they need it.

The Surgical Care Coalition commissioned a survey of more than 5,000 surgeons, which found that surgeons are facing serious financial distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the cuts were announced before the pandemic, with the combined impact of the planned CMS cuts and the financial distress due to COVID-19, surgeons and hospitals will face difficult decisions to keep surgical practices afloat. In addition to other findings, the survey found that even before the CMS cuts:

- One-in-three private practice surgeons are concerned they will have to shut down, limiting choice and access.
- Nearly half of surgeons face more difficult financial decisions and are responding by either cutting their own pay or by paying employees in the face of declining revenues.

"These cuts presented a difficult future for surgical patients, even before COVID-19 hit. If they go into effect while the country is dealing with the consequences of the pandemic, American patients will pay an even greater, devastating cost," said David B. Hoyt, MD, FACS, American College of Surgeons Executive Director. "Surgeons play a key role in America's health care system, which is already under strain from COVID-19. "The Surgical Care Coalition is against these cuts because they will ultimately hurt the patients we care for every day."

About the Surgical Care Coalition

The Surgical Care Coalition advocates for access to quality surgical care for all Americans. The Surgical Care Coalition is comprised of 12 surgical professional associations that proudly represent more than 150,000 surgeons working across the country with a common goal of improving the quality of care, and quality of life, for all patients. The founding members have met and informally worked together for nearly three decades to promote sound policy solutions to the U.S. Congress and federal regulatory agencies to solve the biggest challenges in health care.

Founding members of the Surgical Care Coalition:

- [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#)
- [American Association of Neurological Surgeons](#)
- [American College of Osteopathic Surgeons](#)
- [American College of Surgeons](#)
- [American Society for Surgery of the Hand](#)
- [American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons](#)
- [American Society of Plastic Surgeons](#)
- [Congress of Neurological Surgeons](#)
- [Society for Vascular Surgery](#)
- [Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons](#)
- [The American Society of Breast Surgeons](#)
- [The Society of Thoracic Surgeons](#)