



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEMATOLOGY

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the American Society of Hematology (ASH), I write to you today regarding the calendar year (CY) 2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) final rule and its potential impact on physicians that care for patients with hematologic disorders.

ASH represents more than 18,000 clinicians and scientists worldwide who are committed to the study and treatment of blood and blood-related diseases. These disorders encompass malignant hematologic disorders such as leukemia, lymphoma, and multiple myeloma, as well as non-malignant conditions such as sickle cell anemia, thalassemia, bone marrow failure, venous thromboembolism, and hemophilia. In addition, hematologists are pioneers in demonstrating the potential of treating various hematologic diseases and continue to be innovators in the field of stem cell biology, regenerative medicine, transfusion medicine, and gene therapy.

ASH strongly supports the long-overdue changes to the valuation of and documentation requirements for the office/outpatient evaluation and management (E/M) services, originally finalized in the CY 2020 Medicare rulemaking, and looks forward to these changes being implemented on January 1, 2021 as stipulated in the CY 2021 MPFS final rule. E/M services are the backbone of the cognitive work done by hematologists as well as other specialists for their patients. Patients with hematologic diseases and disorders frequently have a complex history and require extensive counseling, emotional support, and lengthy discussions related to goals of care, including quality of life. These diseases and disorders are often rare, and treatment is typically very unique to each patient. Additionally, many visits incorporate high-level interpretation and explanation to patients of associated lab and radiographic data as hematology diagnoses and treatment is closely aligned with lab results.

The Society, however, joins the rest of the medical community with grave concerns over the CY 2021 conversion factor and the 10.2% decrease in payment that physicians will experience for all services provided under the Medicare Fee Schedule. While Hematology/Oncology is listed by CMS as a specialty that will be positively impacted by the changes in the MPFS, ASH recognizes that many of its members will experience decreases based on services they provide in their specific practices. This is especially true for our subspecialists in bone marrow transplantation, apheresis, and providers of chemotherapy. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an undue burden on hematologists as they care for immunocompromised patients as well as individuals with sickle cell disease whom the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stated are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. ASH urges Congress to not allow the CY 2021 conversion factor included in the MPFS Final Rule to take effect.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter. If you have any questions or if the Society can ever serve as a resource to you, please reach out to Leslie Brady, ASH Policy and Practice Manager, at lbrady@hematology.org or 716-361-2764 (cell).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin S. Tallman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martin S. Tallman, MD
President