



April 30, 2025

Dr. Mehmet Oz
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Oz,

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I would like to extend our congratulations on your appointment as the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). During your confirmation hearings, you made several important commitments to improving healthcare access, enhancing transparency, and empowering beneficiaries and physicians alike with better tools. The AAFP shares these goals and stands ready to assist you in your important work to make and keep America healthy.

The AAFP represents over 128,000 family physicians, residents, and medical students across the United States. Our members are dedicated to providing comprehensive care to patients of all ages, and we are committed to advancing the health of our communities through advocacy, education, and research.

We are particularly excited about your focus on empowering beneficiaries with better tools and more transparency, as well as your commitment to incentivizing healthcare providers to optimize their care with real-time information. These priorities align closely with our mission to ensure that all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable healthcare.

As you begin your tenure at CMS, we look forward to collaborating with you on several key initiatives, including:

1. Strengthening Primary Care : Family physicians play a vital role in the healthcare system, conducting approximately one in five office visits, which amounts to 192 million visits annually. We believe that investing in primary care is essential to nearly every health-related policy goal of the Trump administration. Additionally, we know that when patients are seen in the primary care setting, Medicare and Medicaid, as well as the patients

themselves, save money while freeing up capacity of emergency rooms to treat emergencies.

2. Addressing Chronic Diseases : The AAFP supports efforts to tackle the chronic disease epidemic through preventive services and comprehensive care. We are eager to work with you to develop strategies that address the root causes of chronic diseases and promote healthier lifestyles as our members are on the front lines of this battle every day, in every community of America. We welcome the opportunity to share data, resources, and best practices from our members' own practices in any way you would find helpful.

3. Enhancing Rural Healthcare Access: Many of our members serve in rural and underserved areas, where access to healthcare remains a significant challenge. Family medicine is the physician specialty most likely to be present in rural communities. We support policy efforts that focus on maintaining the training and scope of practice of family physicians to serve the needs of rural communities where other specialties are less likely to practice and promoting policies that allow for telehealth to make it easier for patients to access their doctors when time and distance are obstacles to them.ⁱ In a 2022 survey of 185 rural hospitals, family physicians delivered babies in 67% of these hospitals and were the only physicians who delivered babies in 27% of these hospitals.ⁱⁱ We appreciate your commitment to expanding telehealth and streamlining FDA approvals to improve healthcare delivery in these communities.

4. Modernizing Federal Healthcare Programs: We recognize the importance of Medicaid and Medicare in providing essential coverage to millions of Americans, as well as the fact that many elements of these programs are overdue for reform. We look forward to collaborating with you to ensure that these programs continue to meet the needs of the patient populations who rely on these programs the most while safeguarding taxpayer funds from fraud, waste, and abuse.

Additionally, we believe that one way you can achieve immediate success on many of these initiatives is by updating the primary care exception (PCE). The AAFP greatly appreciates CMS' request for information on PCE reform in the CY 2025 MPFS proposed rule and looks forward to seeing a formal policy update in the CY 2026 MPFS. Expanding the list of services included in the PCE will meaningfully improve Medicare beneficiaries' access to high-quality services and help ensure the next generation of family physicians is well trained to provide the comprehensive, preventive care necessary to achieve your and the administration healthcare goals. Specifically, we recommend adding level 4 and 5

office/outpatient evaluation and management (E/M) visits, preventive services, and patient continuity and integration of care codes to the PCE list. These changes will enhance the training of resident physicians, improve patient access to primary care, and ensure the sustainability of residency programs.

We are confident that your leadership, medical background, and enthusiasm for innovation will bring positive changes to CMS and the healthcare system as a whole. The AAFP stands ready to support you in your efforts to make America healthy again and to advance the health and well-being of all Americans.

We look forward to working closely with you and your team and would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you and your staff in the near future. Should you have any questions, please contact David Tully, Vice President, Government Relations, at dtully@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Furr, M.D., FAAFP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven Furr, MD, FAAFP

American Academy of Physicians, Board Chair

ⁱ Barreto T, Jetty A, Eden AR, Petterson S, Bazemore A, Peterson LE. Distribution of Physician Specialties by Ruralness. *J Rural Health*. 2021 Sep;37(4):714-722. doi: 10.1111/jrh.12548. Epub 2020 Dec 4. PMID: 33274780.

ⁱⁱ Deutchman M, Macaluso F, Bray E, Evans D, Boulger J, Quinn K, Pierce C, Onello E, Porter J, Warren W, Erickson JS, Bright P, Maness P, Luke S, James KA. The impact of family physicians in rural maternity care. *Birth*. 2022 Jun;49(2):220-232. doi: 10.1111/birt.12591. Epub 2021 Sep 23. PMID: 34558093.