



May 20, 2020

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senate  
506 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet  
United States Senate  
261 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Shaheen and Bennet:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 136,700 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to share our organization's support for your legislation, the *Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payments Improvement Act*. This legislation is one important way that Congress can provide immediate financial relief to family physician practices that have been critically disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment (AAP) program — which the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) unexpectedly halted for Medicare Part B providers — provided necessary advance payments to physicians. Though flawed, the program allowed primary care physicians to stem some of the losses they have experienced while continuing to pay staff and see patients. Stopping AAP has hindered primary care physicians' ability to maintain practice operations in the midst of this pandemic. Your legislation restoring the program for Part B providers, and extending and improving its repayment terms, would create a lifeline by enabling more vulnerable primary care practices to take advantage of the program.

Data suggest that Americans' health and well-being are in jeopardy if Congress and the administration do not act now to put primary care on a more sustainable path. According to a recent survey<sup>1</sup>, 47% of primary care clinicians report having laid off or furloughed staff, two-thirds report that less than half of what they do is reimbursable, and 45% are unsure if they have the funds to stay open for the next four weeks.

Your targeted and timely legislation, along with additional financial support for primary care clinicians, will help stabilize our nation's primary care infrastructure and preserve critical health care access for Americans in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the future.

We are pleased to support this important legislation and look forward to working with you to ensure its passage. If you have any questions, please contact Erica Cischke, [ecischke@aafp.org](mailto:ecischke@aafp.org).

Sincerely,

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**STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA**

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Dayton, OH

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Columbia, SC

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<sup>1</sup> Etz, Rebecca: "Quick COVID-19 Primary Care Survey" <https://www.pcpcc.org/2020/04/23/primary-care-covid19-week-6-survey>

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