



**When Seconds Count...**  
Physician Anesthesiologists Save Lives.™



## **Repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB)** ***Protect Medicare Payments to Anesthesiologists***

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) created the non-elected Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) which would have sweeping powers to mandate added across-the-board or other targeted reductions in Part B payments on top of sustainable growth rate (SGR) and sequestration-related cuts.

Members of Congress play an essential role in shaping health policies that best meet the needs of their communities and constituents to ensure that the health care system is equipped to care for diverse populations across the country. Under IPAB, major health policy decisions will rest in the hands of 15 unelected and largely unaccountable individuals. Fewer than half of IPAB members can be health care providers, and none will be permitted to be practicing physicians or be otherwise employed.

However, IPAB cuts will disproportionately fall on physicians, as providers representing 37 percent of all Medicare payments -- including hospitals and hospice care -- are exempt from IPAB cuts until 2020. As a result of the already unreasonably low Medicare payments for anesthesia services -- "the 33% problem" - IPAB cuts could disproportionately impact anesthesiologists specifically. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Medicare's anesthesia payment rates are 33% of commercial providers' payment rates. Studies show Medicare payment rates for other physician services are between 75-80% of what commercial insurers pay. Physicians already face cuts over the next decade. IPAB will cut payments only, doing nothing to encourage greater access and quality care for our health care dollars.

The Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015, would repeal the IPAB. Legislation has been introduced in both the House (H.R. 1190) and Senate (S. 141) with bipartisan support. Congress should act to repeal the IPAB and ensure fair Medicare payments to physician anesthesiologists.

### **KEY POINTS:**

- The non-elected and largely unaccountable Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) will have sweeping powers to mandate across the board payment or other cuts on top of SGR and sequestration cuts.
- IPAB not only severely limits Congressional authority, it eliminates the transparency of hearings, debate and any meaningful opportunity for stakeholder input.
- IPAB cuts will disproportionately fall on physicians, and could disproportionately impact anesthesiologists, who already experience a "33% problem."
- Congress should act to pass legislation to repeal the IPAB.

### **CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST:**

- Please support IPAB repeal legislation (S. 141 and H.R. 1190), the "Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015."
- Protect and enhance Medicare payments to physician anesthesiologists by addressing the anesthesiology payment "33% problem" and reversing draconian Medicare cuts to important pain care procedures.

To learn more about patient-centered, physician-led anesthesia care and the medical specialty of anesthesiology, please visit [www.asahq.org/WhenSecondsCount](http://www.asahq.org/WhenSecondsCount)

American Society of  
**Anesthesiologists®**