



July 26, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell:

On behalf of the American Occupational Therapy Association, the American Physical Therapy Association, and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, we write to convey our strong opposition to extending mandatory Medicare sequestration as a means to pay for physical infrastructure.

Our members provide essential therapy services to help America's seniors maintain the highest possible level of function so they may continue leading happy, healthy, and productive lives. Audiologists, speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, and occupational therapy practitioners have worked tirelessly to ensure older individuals maintained access to safe and effective therapy services during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. They did so even while personal protective equipment was scarce and reimbursements were being reduced as a result of payment changes implemented in the 2021 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule final rule.

While our organizations understand the importance of rebuilding America's infrastructure, we collectively oppose further reducing payments to Medicare providers in order to pay for enhancements to physical infrastructure such as roads and bridges, which have nothing to do with improving the health of Medicare beneficiaries. This policy will inhibit the ability of providers to furnish critical services that ensure the health and well-being of beneficiaries just as more and more Americans are becoming Medicare eligible. The Medicare sequester is an arbitrary solution to control federal spending that will only make it more difficult for Medicare beneficiaries recovering from a stroke or traumatic brain injury, and those suffering from chronic conditions, to obtain the rehabilitation services they need.

In the next few years Congress must work to address long-term challenges associated with current Medicare payment policies and ensure future payment systems reflect a modern health care delivery system focused on advancing appropriate health outcomes for beneficiaries. Extending across the board cuts to Medicare, in order to pay for physical infrastructure will only make this task more difficult, while doing nothing to improve health care, we therefore respectfully ask that you consider these factors and refrain from extending Medicare sequestration cuts to pay for infrastructure legislation.

Thank you for your support of the long-term needs of America's health care workforce and the needs of Medicare beneficiaries. We look forward to continuing to work with the Senate to ensure Medicare beneficiaries have timely and robust access to the services they need, and that our members provide, now and in the future.

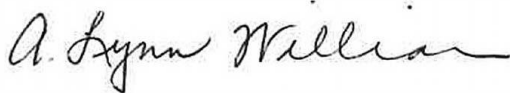
Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Wendy C. Hildenbrand in black ink.

Wendy C. Hildenbrand, PhD, MPH, OTR/L, FAOTA
President, American Occupational Therapy Association

Handwritten signature of Sharon L. Dunn in black ink.

Sharon L. Dunn, PT, PhD
Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy
APTA President

Handwritten signature of A. Lynn Williams in black ink.

A. Lynn Williams, PhD, CCC-SLP
2021 ASHA President