



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

November 6, 2020

The Honorable Ami Bera  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1727 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Larry Bucshon  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2313 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bera and Bucshon:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to thank you for your leadership by introducing H.R. 8702, the  *Holding Providers Harmless From Medicare Cuts During COVID-19 Act of 2020*.

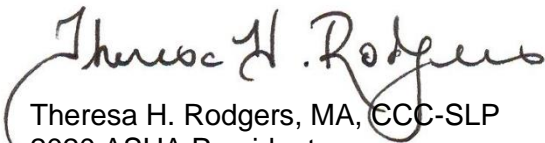
The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 211,000 individuals who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) identify, assess, and treat speech and language problems, including swallowing disorders.

It is critical to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have access to essential health care services provided by audiologists and SLPs both during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. However, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has proposed slashing reimbursement for many of these services starting next year to pay for increases to other services paid under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. These cuts will have serious and negative consequences on the ability of audiologists and SLPs to provide hearing, balance, speech, language, swallowing, and cognition related care to Medicare beneficiaries.

The  *Holding Providers Harmless From Medicare Cuts During COVID-19 Act of 2020* will preserve beneficiary access to these services by providing relief payments that will hold providers harmless from the impact of these cuts. ASHA appreciates the letter you recently sent to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy—signed by 229 members—urging them to pass a bipartisan solution to this problem, and looks forward to working with you and others to ensure passage of legislation by the House to stop these cuts this year.

Thank you again for your leadership on H.R. 8702. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Jerry White, ASHA's director of federal affairs for health care, at [jwhite@asha.org](mailto:jwhite@asha.org).

Sincerely,

  
Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP  
2020 ASHA President