

AAOS CY2027 MPFS Proposed Rule Response

Partner Communications Toolkit

TOOLKIT PURPOSE

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) calendar year 2027 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) proposed rule includes a series of payment policies that threaten patient access to community-based orthopaedic care and place unprecedented pressure on independent practices. As an orthopaedic advocate, your voice is critical to this conversation.

This toolkit is designed to help you communicate the real-world impact of the proposed Medicare physician payment changes. As one of the remaining areas of medicine where private practice continues to play a critical role, orthopaedics faces unique challenges under the proposed rule. Your voice can help policymakers, the media, and your community better understand what's at stake for independent practices and the patients who rely on them for care.

TALKING POINTS

The following messages emphasize AAOS' concerns with provisions in the proposed rule and can be used in your own communications or presentation materials. As the trusted leader in advancing musculoskeletal health, AAOS is asking CMS to stop these cuts, freeze payments at 2026 levels, and work collaboratively with physicians and specialty societies to develop stable, evidence-based payment policies that preserve beneficiary access and strengthen independent practices.

- The CY2027 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule is fundamentally a patient access issue. The real question is whether Medicare beneficiaries will continue to have timely access to high-quality orthopaedic care in their communities.
- CMS is proposing several policies at once that, together, represent one of the most significant threats to independent orthopaedic practice in decades. The combined effect is greater financial instability and increased pressure for physicians to sell their practices to hospitals and large health systems. Policies of concern include:
 - Reducing payment for separate identifiable evaluation and management (E/M) services billed with Modifier-25 on the same day as procedures with 0-, 10-, and 90-day global periods;
 - Reducing relative value units (RVUs) for total shoulder, total hip, and total knee arthroplasty services along with shoulder hemiarthroplasty; and
 - Removing the Indirect Practice Cost Index (IPCI) from the calculation of practice expense RVUs.
- When independent practices disappear, patients lose. Once independent practices disappear, those care options rarely return. Fewer community-based practices mean fewer choices, longer wait times, and reduced access to care.
- Patients shouldn't have to make a second trip because Medicare discourages physicians from providing comprehensive care in one visit. Delayed diagnoses, additional appointments, and increased beneficiary cost-sharing are real-world consequences patients will notice immediately.

- Independent orthopaedic practices are part of the solution—not the problem. They expand patient choice, deliver high-quality care, and help control healthcare costs by providing efficient, community-based care.
 - When Medicare penalizes innovation and efficiency, patients ultimately pay the price.
 - Our goal isn't to preserve the status quo in the long term. We're asking CMS to work with physicians over the next year to develop evidence-based payment policies that reflect clinical reality, preserve patient access, and maintain Medicare's fiscal responsibility.
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SOCIAL CONTENT

Sharing your perspective as a physician helps bring the real-world impact of these policies into the conversation and expands the reach of our efforts. Below are sample social media posts and graphics you can share with your networks. Be sure to tag [@AAOSAdvocacy](#) on X and [AAOS Advocacy](#) on LinkedIn to amplify the reach of your message.

Best Practices

When creating posts, aim to:

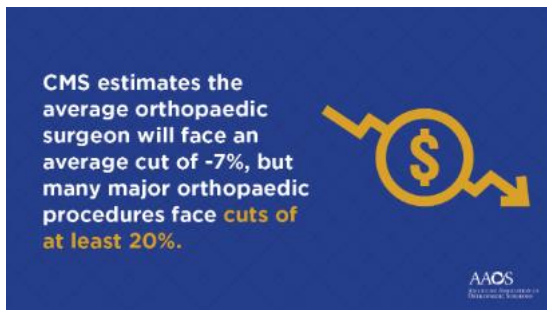
- Share your firsthand perspective on how the proposed Medicare physician payment changes could affect your practice and your patients.
- Keep the tone conversational, authentic, and patient-focused.
- Highlight the connection between physician payment policy, private practice sustainability, and patient access to care.
- Use specific examples, when appropriate, to illustrate potential impacts such as longer wait times, patients having to return for a second appointment, reduced access to specialists, or challenges facing independent practices.
- Mention AAOS' advocacy efforts and direct audiences to the campaign landing page or resource hub for additional information.
 - **Example:** Learn more about how the CY2027 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule could affect physician practices and patient access to musculoskeletal care, and explore resources from AAOS.
- Focus on why this issue matters to Medicare beneficiaries, physicians, and your communities.
- Include a clear call to action (e.g., Learn more, Share your story, Contact policymakers, Explore resources).

Helpful Reminders

- Lead with patients whenever possible.
- Share facts and experiences, not speculation.
- Keep posts concise and easy to understand.
- Consider including a photo from your practice, care team, or community to increase engagement (be sure to stay HIPAA compliant).

Suggested Social Media Post Copy

- Independent orthopaedic practices are an essential part of our healthcare system in [Region/State]. They provide high-quality, efficient care while expanding options for patients. CMS should work with physicians on payment policies that preserve patient access and support community-based care.
- As an orthopaedic surgeon in [Region/State], I'm concerned about how CMS' proposed CY2027 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule could affect patient access and the future of independent practices. Patients deserve policies that support timely care.
- Join me in calling on CMS to work with physicians to create evidence-based payment policies that reflect clinical reality, preserve patient access, and support high-quality orthopaedic care.



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ENGAGING WITH MEDIA

Local reporters are often interested in understanding how national policy changes affect patients and healthcare providers in their communities. If you're comfortable speaking with media, consider reaching out to local reporters to share how the proposed Medicare physician payment changes could affect physician practices and Medicare beneficiaries in your area.

To help get the conversation started, we've developed a sample outreach email that you can customize and send to local media contacts. If you need assistance identifying reporters in your market, contact media@aaos.org for support.

Sample Media Pitch for Email

Subject: Local Orthopaedic Surgeon Available to Discuss Medicare Payment Proposal's Impact on Patient Care

Email Copy:

Dear [INSERT REPORTER'S NAME HERE],

I'm reaching out because proposed reimbursement cuts in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) for CY2027 could have significant consequences for Medicare patients and the future of independent orthopaedic care in [INSERT YOUR REGION/STATE].

As an orthopaedic surgeon and a member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, I'm concerned that these reductions could increase financial pressure on independent physician practices and make it more difficult for Medicare beneficiaries to receive timely, high-quality musculoskeletal care in their communities.

If finalized, these changes could contribute to fewer community-based care options, longer wait times, and reduced patient access to orthopaedic services.

I would be happy to discuss what these proposed changes could mean for patients and physician practices in our community and serve as a local resource for any related coverage you're planning.

Please let me know if you're interested in speaking.

Thank you,

[INSERT YOUR NAME/CREDENTIALS]

[INSERT PRACTICE NAME]

[INSERT CITY, STATE]

[INSERT PHONE OR EMAIL ADDRESS]

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Share Your Story

Help illustrate the real-world impact of the proposed Medicare physician payment changes by recording a short video testimonial. Your perspective can help policymakers, media, and the public better understand how the CY2027 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule could affect physician practices and patient access to musculoskeletal care. Submitted content will be considered for AAOS social media use and to support AAOS efforts with Congress.

[Submit your video](#)

Learn More

Access additional information and advocacy resources:

- Press Release: [AAOS sounds alarm on CMS Medicare proposal that drives consolidation and harms patient access to care](#)
- [CY2027 MPFS Payment Summary](#)
- [Quality and Value-Based Programs Summary](#)
- [Ambulatory Specialty Model Summary](#)
- [AAOS CY2027 MPFS Proposed Rule Overview Slides](#)

Need assistance?

For additional information, contact: advocacy@aaos.org