

Occupational Therapy Payment Cuts

Notes to Hill Day Participants:

Your meeting with a Senator/Rep or staff should include a brief introduction to occupational therapy that will help emphasize and the importance of the profession and the need for policy changes. You should start the discussion by making sure the Rep/Senator or staffer knows what occupational therapy is and why it is important. That will help emphasize why all of these policies are important.

While discussing these payment cuts, and why they have been particularly tough for OT, you don't have to be an expert on the history of the cuts. You are simply providing a high-level overview and providing them with general details. There are two general asks (below) but if someone seems particularly interested in what has happened to OT specifically under Medicare, please note that in the app after your meeting. If they have questions you cannot answer, that's okay, we can help you follow up with the answer.

Discussion Points for Your Meeting

- Occupational therapy practitioners have been particularly hard hit by cuts to Medicare payments since 2021. However, we have experienced cuts or freezes since 2013.
- If no further action is taken, OT services will receive a phased in cut of 9% between 2021 and 2025 because of Medicare budget neutrality policies. This does not even account for inflation.
- Budget neutrality means that any increase in payment for one set of healthcare practitioners triggers a cut to other practitioners. Therapy providers have been particularly hard hit by these changes because we cannot bill any of the codes that have received large recent increases.
- Additionally, payment for services provided by occupational therapy assistants, who provide 38% of all Medicare Part B OT services, were cut by 15% in 2022.
- These cuts, in addition to payment changes and freezes from 2013 to 2020 have eroded payment for critical occupational therapy services to well below 2013 payment rates, in real dollars (not inflationary ones).
- As Congress considers end of the year legislation – we urge you to adopt policies that will help reverse these cuts for 2025 and into the future.

Your Ask:

- 1) Please support passage of legislation to provide an increase to Medicare payments by at least the rate of inflation, before the end of the year. One way to support this policy in the House is to co-sponsor the *Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act (H.R 2474)*.
- 2) As Congress looks at broader Medicare reform, please support policies specific to therapy, that will help to offset more than a decade of payment cuts, such as repealing past cuts to therapy services.