

Support Patient Access to Care by Establishing Stable Physician Payment Updates



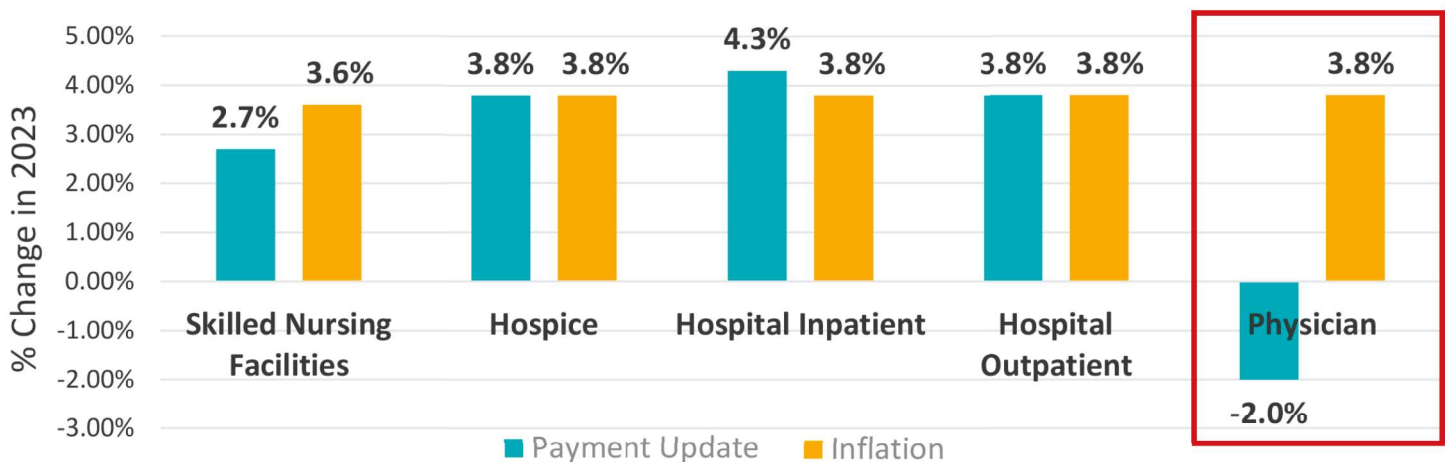
BACKGROUND

While the cost of practicing medicine has risen dramatically in recent years, Medicare physician payment has not kept pace, and even declined. The Medicare Economic Index (MEI) measures the average annual price change for inputs of physician services. According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission's March 2023 report, while the MEI increased by nearly 24% between 2010 and 2022, physician payment only increased 6%. Rising costs associated with staff wages, equipment, infrastructure, and other overhead, compounded by challenges associated with recovering from the pandemic, are hampering physicians' ability to deliver care to patients who need it.

PROBLEM

Osteopathic physicians across the nation, including many in rural and underserved areas, are struggling to keep their practices open due to increased expenses and insufficient, unstable payment rates. The Medicare Economic Index (MEI) measures the average annual price change for inputs of physician services. According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission's March 2023 report, while the MEI increased by nearly 24% between 2010 and 2022, physician payment only increased 6%. Rising costs associated with staff wages, equipment, infrastructure, and other overhead, compounded by challenges associated with recovering from the pandemic, are hampering physicians' ability to deliver care to patients who need it.

2023 Update to Medicare Payment by Provider Type, Relative to Inflation



SOLUTION

Congress must act to protect physician practices by co-sponsoring H.R. 2474 to help establish stable, annual payment updates to the Medicare physician fee schedule based on the Medicare Economic Index (MEI).