



### Washington Update

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Chairman  
ASRS Federal Affairs Committee




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### Financial Disclosure

- No relevant financial relationships to disclose.




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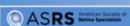
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### ASRS Priority Issues

- Ensuring adequate Medicare physician payment.
- Protecting patient access to Part B drugs and preserving physician autonomy to provide appropriate treatment.
- Curbing plans' use of prior authorization and step therapy.




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### Physician Payment: What Happened this Week

- ASRS advocated for immediate relief from the full 3.4% Medicare payment cuts that went into effect January 1, 2024.
- Advocacy efforts from all across medicine, including 660 ASRS members and practice staff sending 2327 messages to legislators, resulted in partial relief restoring approximately 50% of the cut.
- But Congress failed to fix the full cut
- The final result – a **2.04%** cut from 2023 payment levels.




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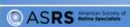
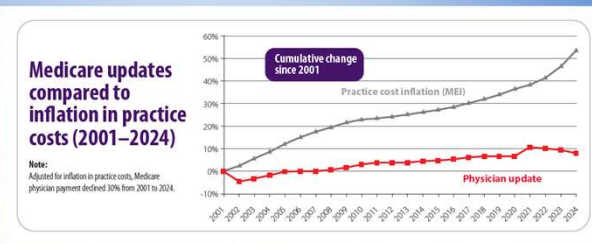
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### Physician Payments – Two Decades Behind Inflation




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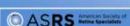
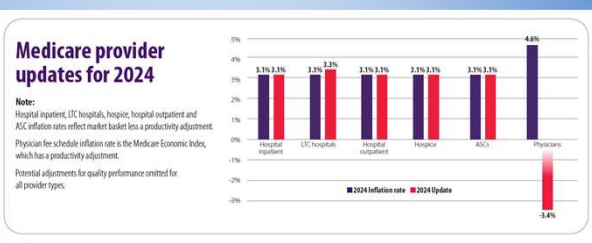
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### Only Physicians Got Cut in 2024




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## Retina Codes Adjusted for Inflation

	ESTABLISHED EXAM 92012	ESTABLISHED EXAM 92014	NEW EXAM 96204	OCT 92134	FA 92235	PP 92250	RETINOPEXY 67145	INJECTION 67928	PPV 67036	PPV/PBP 67940	PPV/PM 67642	SD/PPH 67108
2014	97.41	126.8	166.84	46.4	111.31*	79.88	548.42	106.65	1,004.12	1,486.10	1,588.92	1,882.82
2024	99.48	127.8	167.48	49.91	166.66	37.84	245.11	113.26	891.84	1,027.89	1,132.22	1,177.84
Adjusted Inflation*	113.21	166.92	210.71	81.18	148.79*	105.03	723.69	140.42	1,323.93	1993.81	2054.68	2218.82
Adjusted 2024 %	76.10%	76.44%	76.23%	86.87%	56.76%	31.82%	13.29%	80.34%	87.20%	92.86%	94.64%	91.89%

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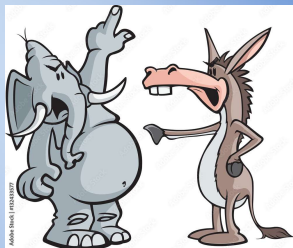
Base as of '17

## Physician Payment: What We Want

- Regular, inflation-based updates to the conversion factor.
- Modify budget neutrality in the fee schedule.
  - Recent annual cuts are due to budget neutrality.**
  - Increase the threshold to trigger neutrality adjustments
  - Waive neutrality on new services – **E/M add-on code**, remote monitoring/AI
- Replace MIPS with a more clinically-meaningful and less burdensome alternative.
- Increase APM opportunities for specialists.

## So what are we likely to get?

The political situation complicates our prospects.



### Administration Priorities

1. Get re-elected.
2. Get re-elected.
3. Maintain positive economic growth/soft landing.
4. Contain border/migrant issues.
5. Prevent further escalation of foreign conflicts.



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### Congressional Priorities Are Competing

#### Senate – Dem Control



- Help Biden get re-elected.
- Full-year funding agreement.
- Comprehensive immigration reform.
- Foreign aid.

#### House – GOP Control



- Prevent Biden from getting re-elected.
- Mike Johnson wants to keep his job.
- Move past current government funding crisis.
- Manage competing factions/slim majority.

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### Payment Advocacy – the rest of 2024

- ASRS and physician groups are focused on securing long-term reform.
  - First step: H.R. 2474 would tie physician payment to the Medical Economic Index (MEI) that measures healthcare inflation.
- Target the post-Election lame duck session for action on reform.

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### Utilization Management

- Prior authorization reform lost steam in the last Congress due to unexpectedly high score from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).
- CMS is implementing key provisions of the bill through the regulatory process.
- If CBO decides CMS reforms reduce the cost of the bill, it will likely pass quickly.




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### More Work Needed on Prior Auth/Step Therapy

- CMS excluded all drugs from MA electronic prior authorization regulations.
  - Acknowledged pushback from ASRS and other organizations in the final rule.
  - May address this in the future.
- CMS hasn't taken any action to reign in MA step therapy.
  - Even though it says plans can't have stricter requirements for medical necessity.




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### ASRS Advocacy Makes a Difference!

- ✓ CMS prior authorization regs implement important patient-protections and oversight of plans.
- ✓ ASRS was instrumental in securing changes to the MIPS Diabetes Cost measure to **exempt retina specialists**.




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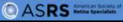
### ASRS Advocacy Makes a Difference!



Two photographs showing ASRS members in professional settings. The top photo shows three people standing together, and the bottom photo shows two men in suits standing side-by-side.

✓ ASRS successfully developed and CMS is implementing three new MIPS quality measures.

✓ ASRS successfully advocated for major changes to the Part B drug wastage policy to prevent under-dosing.



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A classic illustration of Uncle Sam pointing directly at the viewer, wearing his iconic top hat and blue coat.

## WE WANT YOU!



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### Help Support Inflation-Based Payment Updates Contact Congress RIGHT NOW!

MDs/DOs



Practice Staff





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**THANK YOU & QUESTIONS?**

 **ASRS**  
Center for the Study of  
Human Error

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