

UPDATE



# neurosurgery

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Specialty Physicians Oppose Medicare Commission’s Proposal to Eliminate a Quality Payment Program**

*Group cites the fact that it would be a significant step backward in quality improvement efforts*

Washington, DC—Joining the Alliance of Specialty Medicine — a coalition of national medical specialty societies representing more than 100,000 specialty physicians — the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) recently sent a [letter](#) to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) commenting on MedPAC’s policy consideration to eliminate the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) program.

In the letter, the group strongly opposed MedPAC’s policy option aimed at moving physicians toward Advanced Alternative Payment Models (A-APMs) by eliminating the MIPS program and replacing it with a Voluntary Value Program (VVP). The group highlighted the following reasons for their opposition:

- A lack of A-APMs for specialists to meaningfully engage exists;
- The limitations of population-based measures in determining quality and cost of specialty medical care will hinder specialists’ performance in “large” entities;
- The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) very clearly intended to promote the development of clinically relevant, specialty-based quality measures;
- Most physicians do not practice in “large” entities; thus impeding these individuals or groups from successful participation; and
- Fee-for-service remains a viable reimbursement structure for many specialists and subspecialists where alternative models of care and payment have already addressed the value equation for the vast majority of their services.

“Eliminating MIPS in favor of MedPAC’s proposed new quality program would discourage specialty physicians from developing robust quality and outcomes measures, including the establishment of high-value clinical data registries, and would thwart efforts to collect and report performance data,” said Alex B. Valadka, MD, FAANS, a neurosurgeon from Richmond, Va. and president of the AANS. “Specialty physicians are working with CMS and Congress to improve MIPS and MedPAC’s proposal would be a significant step backward.”

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*The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit [www.aans.org](http://www.aans.org) or [www.cns.org](http://www.cns.org) or [www.neurosurgeryblog.org](http://www.neurosurgeryblog.org).*