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Infectious Diseases Society of America

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November 7, 2022

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

I am writing on behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSAs) and its more than 12,000 members throughout the nation to express our substantial disappointment and consternation that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has again seriously undervalued the work of infectious diseases (ID) physicians in the annual Medicare Physician Fee Schedule.

IDSAs respectfully requests a meeting with you this month to discuss in detail the rationale behind our repeated requests for increased payments for our inpatient work. Participating in the meeting would be leaders of IDSAs from a variety of communities so that you and your staff can get the most helpful perspectives on this issue.

At a time when our nation has never depended upon IDSAs members more, when our members have consistently answered the call from the Biden Administration to assist in public outreach on vaccines, boosters, COVID-19 therapeutics and more, and when our members continue to face relentless outbreaks and surges in infectious diseases from monkeypox and polio to RSV and one of the worst influenza seasons we've seen in more than a decade, it is particularly grievous that the patient care we provide would not merit a more realistic Medicare payment rate that more accurately reflects the complexity and value of care we provide.

We know that there can be winners and losers in the Physician Fee Schedule process, as we have consistently seen other specialties rewarded above infectious diseases, despite our central role not only in emergency responses but in nearly every type of care delivered in the hospital. We believe that the lengthy, detailed and evidence-based comments IDSAs submitted made a very persuasive case for increases to the values of inpatient Evaluation and Management (E/M) codes. Our field's inadequate pay — below that of general internal medicine despite our additional training — poses a direct barrier to recruiting the next generation of ID physicians. CMS had the opportunity to change this dynamic and to send a signal that we and our work are valued, particularly during a pandemic. Instead, CMS chose to reject our proposed increases without even a satisfactory explanation.

With all that IDSAs members are doing today to save the lives of Americans of all ages and races, we believe that we merit a personal meeting with you to develop a plan to demonstrate the Administration's support for our profession in the coming year. We have policy ideas that we've shared directly with Secretary Becerra in a recent meeting and believe that you will benefit from hearing from us as well.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. del Rio', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carlos del Rio, M.D, FIDSA

President, IDSA