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August 18, 2023

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
170 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senate
425 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Capito, Stabenow, Menendez, and Wicker:

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) is the world's largest neurology specialty society representing more than 40,000 neurologists and clinical neuroscience professionals. The AAN is dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care. A neurologist is a physician with specialized training in diagnosing, treating, and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system. These disorders affect one in six people and include conditions such as multiple sclerosis (MS), Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, migraine, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, ALS, and spinal muscular atrophy.

The AAN writes to express our support of S. 2379 *Concentrating on High-Value Alzheimer's Needs to Get to an End (CHANGE) Act*. Nearly one in ten U.S. adults aged 65 and older have dementia, and an additional 22% of Americans have mild cognitive impairment.¹ Identifying these cases through validated cognitive screening is critical to connect patients to needed resources and neurologic care. Documentation of the screening tool used can ensure that later assessments can be compared more easily and therefore give a clearer picture of a patient's cognitive status. Additionally, including this screening in the wellness visits as reimbursement eligible is critical in ensuring medical practices can provide the service. As practices are facing financial pressures related to workforce shortages, high overhead costs, and COVID-19 recovery, reimbursing for this screening in the wellness visit is necessary for clinical operations for offering those services.

As you are looking for ways to ensure that patients with Alzheimer's are able to be diagnosed and treated in a timely manner, we hope you will also consider supporting the implementation of the G2211 code in the Calendar Year (CY) 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. This new code allows physicians to be properly reimbursed for complex visits – including those for patients with Alzheimer's disease. Implementation of this code was delayed due to COVID-19, but we hope you will support its implementation in 2024 to ensure Alzheimer's patients have access to quality care.

¹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaneurology/article-abstract/2797274>

The AAN is committed to promoting brain health across all age groups, and providing cognitive impairment detection tools as part of a wellness visit is an important step forward in advancing brain health for older Americans.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. If you have any questions or requests for additional information, please contact Madeline Turbes, Health Policy Manager, at mturbes@aan.com or Max Goldman, Director of Congressional Affairs, at mgoldman@aan.com. We look forward to working with you as we strive to provide quality care to Americans at risk of dementia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlayne E. Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carlayne E. Jackson, MD, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology