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PRESS STATEMENT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEADING ADVOCATES FOR SENIORS' TIMELY ACCESS TO CARE LEGISLATION APPLAUD SENATE BILL INTRODUCTION

WASHINGTON, DC: December 15, 2020

The Regulatory Relief Coalition (RRC), a group of national physician specialty organizations lends its strong support for [legislation](#) introduced today in the U.S. Senate, the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act introduced today by Senators Brown (D-OH) and Thune (R-SD).

We are particularly pleased to support this bipartisan legislation because it would reform the use of prior authorization in Medicare Advantage through a streamlined and standardized process that focuses on increased transparency. The bill is a common-sense solution that would call on the Secretary of Health and Human Services to:

- Establish a real-time, electronic prior authorization process;
- Minimize the use of prior authorization for routinely approved services;
- Ensure prior authorization requests are reviewed by qualified medical personnel;
- Require transparency through regular reporting from MA plans on their use of prior authorization, as well as rates of delay and denial of services, and for determinations that occur in the context of surgeries or other invasive procedures.

Especially during the current COVID-19 crisis, when many patients have already delayed needed care and providers are often working with reduced staff, it is critical to cut down on unnecessary burdens and roadblocks in the health care system that weaken beneficiaries' access to care.

The RRC has been advocating for this legislation since before introduction of the House companion legislation, H.R. 3107 in June of 2019. The House companion bill gained nearly 280 equally divided bipartisan co-sponsors and over 400 endorsing organizations in just the last year and a half. We hope to have similar success in enlisting other Senators and organizational support for the Senate version of the legislation. And, we look forward to the Senate's action to advance this legislation at its earliest possible opportunity.

"Ophthalmologists have told the Academy that prior authorization requirements can have tremendous impact on patient care by preventing timely access to necessary medical care," said David Glasser, MD, Secretary of Federal Affairs of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. "We applaud Senators Sherrod Brown and John Thune for introducing

legislation to protect America's seniors from unnecessary barriers that deny them of timely access to medically necessary care."

Ann R. Stroink, MD, FAANS, a practicing neurosurgeon from Bloomington, Illinois, and chair of the AANS/CNS Washington Committee, said, "Neurosurgeons like take care of very sick patients who suffer from painful and life-threatening neurologic conditions such as brain tumors, debilitating, degenerative spine disorders and Parkinson's Disease, and they cannot afford to wait or jump through unnecessary hoops to get their life-saving care. We are grateful to Senators Brown and Thune for taking this important step to improve prior authorization for our nation's seniors," Stroink said.

Members of the RRC coalition are: American Academy of Neurology, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Association of Neurological Surgeons, American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, American College of Cardiology, American College of Rheumatology, American College of Surgeons, American Gastroenterological Association, Association for Clinical Oncology, Congress of Neurological Surgeons, National Association of Spine Specialists, and the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Peggy Tighe (Peggy.Tighe@PowersLaw.com) or Rebecca Hyder (rhyder@aao.org) or representatives of organizations in our coalition.