

# American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians®

"The Voice of Interventional Pain Management"

81 Lakeview Drive, Paducah, KY 42001

Phone: (270) 554-9412 - Fax: (270) 554-5394

[www.asipp.org](http://www.asipp.org)

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May 1, 2020

Seema Verma  
Administrator  
U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21244  
[Seema.Verma@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Seema.Verma@cms.hhs.gov)

RE: Thank you from ASIPP and chronic pain patients

Dear Honorable Administrator Verma:

On behalf of the American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP), 50 state societies of interventional pain physicians, Society of Interventional Pain Management Surgery Centers (SIPMS), interventional pain management centers and pain physicians across the country, more importantly, millions of chronic pain patients, and finally the entire physician community and American public, we would like to commend your leadership on multiple issues.

First, we applaud your decision released yesterday to increase payments for audio only services. This will help millions of chronic pain patients who cannot afford video option. [April 15 Letter to Seema Verma](#)

Again, we also applaud your decision to extend the repayment options for Medicare Advancement program. We are hoping to hear from you soon since we are waiting on a legal opinion. However, we continue to face multiple issues. [April 8 Response Letter From CMS](#)

1. Our request for extension of audio only services to August 6 has not been addressed. We would appreciate any assistance in this matter. [April 15 Letter to Seema Verma](#)

Also, please extend the same option to Medicare Advantage Programs and other insurers covered by CMS such as Medicaid and Medicaid Managed Care Organizations.

2. Termination of advancement program. Many of the practices were unable to use this option because of the paperwork glitches produced by some Medicare advisory contractors. They had different requirements for each. The requirements were variable for each MAC. Consequently, many of us, including the multiple board members of ASIPP and SIPMS missed applications. This happened mostly with WPS, whereas CGS and NGS were extremely prompt. Others have released. The majority of the problems were experienced in WPS jurisdiction. We are hoping that the program will be reopened, or at least the applications filed by 4/30 will be considered rather than stopping it on 4/26.
3. We also request you to consider our previous letter on April 9, 2020. There has been significant concern on behalf of members of the Congress for audits and investigations:

These audits and investigations have been onerous. As stated in my previous letter, a number of physicians have been denied funding. Further, it also appears that many of them do not have any merit and also stop their payments without even giving an opportunity. [April 9 Letter to Seema Verma CMS](#)

Recently, it also has come to our attention that these investigations are conducted mostly in minorities, including Haitian Indians. These audits and investigations are getting out of control even during COVID-19. At this time, a permanent solution is required, at the least these investigations must be stopped through August 6, so that physicians can take a breather. At the same time, physicians who are under “so called” investigations, must receive funding, specifically if they filed their applications before 4/30.

Thank you again for your assistance and concern about patient access care, as well as prevention of COVID-19.

**Laxmaiah Manchikanti, MD**

Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, ASIPP, SIPMS  
Co-Director, Pain Management Centers of America  
Medical Director, Pain Management Centers of Paducah and Marion,  
Ambulatory Surgery Center and Pain Care Surgery Center  
Clinical Professor, Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine  
University of Louisville, Kentucky  
Professor of Anesthesiology-Research  
Department of Anesthesiology, School of Medicine  
LSU Health Sciences Center  
2831 Lone Oak Road  
Paducah, KY 42003  
270-554-8373 ext. 4101  
[drm@asipp.org](mailto:drm@asipp.org)

**Harold Cordner, MD**

President, ASIPP  
Florida Pain Management Associates  
13825 U.S. Hwy 1  
Sebastian, FL 32958  
772-388-9998  
[gassdoc@aol.com](mailto:gassdoc@aol.com)

**Amol Sooin, MD**

President-Elect, ASIPP  
President, SIPMS  
Ohio Pain Clinic  
8934 Kingsridge Drive, Suite 101  
Centerville, OH 45458  
937-760-7246  
[ohiopainclinic@gmail.com](mailto:ohiopainclinic@gmail.com)

**Sudhir Diwan, MD**

Immediate Past President, ASIPP  
President, Park Avenue Spine and Pain  
185 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10016  
646-434-0551  
[sudhir.diwan63@gmail.com](mailto:sudhir.diwan63@gmail.com)

**Mahendra Sanapati, MD**

Executive Vice-President, SIPMS  
Secretary, ASIPP  
Co-Director, Pain Management Centers of America  
Medical Director, Advanced Care Pain Clinic  
Evansville, IN 47714  
Phone: (812) 477-7246  
Fax: (812) 477-7240  
[msanapati@gmail.com](mailto:msanapati@gmail.com)