As [the resident of /a family member/friend of a loved one living in a] [life plan community / nursing home], I am writing to express my deep concerns over the reimbursement cuts included in the Fiscal Year 2023 Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Prospective Payment System (PPS) proposed rule.

Nursing homes have faced unprecedented operational and financial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic—a healthcare crisis that has exacerbated long-standing staffing concerns in long-term care. The proposed rule includes a 3.9% payment update that is offset by a 4.6% parity adjustment, resulting in a net reduction of $320 million in payments to providers. These cuts are being proposed at a time expenses continue to rise—not only for COVID-related items, such as personal protective equipment and tests, but also for food, supplies, and staff.

In the current environment, the proposed cuts will undoubtedly result in reduced access to quality care and services for older adults in need, and likely the types of resident services that contribute to their quality of life. Supplies for activities, food, transportation, and outings may be significantly limited or cut. Breakfast may no longer include fresh fruits or lean, unprocessed proteins. Transportation to doctor or community visits may be cut. Access to the salon and social activities with other residents may disappear. Lack of funds also drives decisions like patching a poor roof as opposed to replacing it, or putting off new programming or renovations to improve quality of life.

The proposed cuts could negatively impact care and services in many ways, we just don’t know exactly where the trickle-down will hit the hardest.

Here’s what we do know:

* Efforts to implement impossible federally mandated staffing requirements are also in motion—a move that will most definitely add to providers’ costs. There is no question that staffing is critical to quality care, but those employees must also be paid.
* Many providers where I live are being forced to make difficult decisions with limited options—reduce services, consider mergers, or close altogether.
* Aging services communities that operate nursing homes alongside other types of providers on campus may need to charge residents more for other services. For families living on fixed incomes, that’s unsustainable.

The bottom line is we face a true crisis in access to care and now is ***not the time*** to cut funding to our nursing homes. I urge you not to make any Medicare payment cuts in the FY2023 SNF PPS rule, which will only place additional strain on our country’s ability to serve our older adults.

Sincerely,