

May 18, 2026

Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Hearing titled “Examining the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, MACRA, and Opportunities for Payment Reforms.”

Summary of American College of Radiology (ACR) Written Testimony

Overview

The American College of Radiology (ACR) urges Congress to enact comprehensive reforms to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) and the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) framework. Radiology is a central component of modern healthcare that improves diagnostic accuracy, enables early disease detection, and reduces downstream costs. Radiologists do not control volume, and current Medicare payment policies, combined with a rising demand for imaging and workforce constraints, result in radiologists doing more for less at increasingly unsustainable levels.

Key challenges with Medicare physician payment include declining and inadequate reimbursement, compounded by the lack of a permanent inflationary update in the MPFS. Structural issues with the statutorily required application of budget neutrality lead to further reimbursement volatility, and value-based payment programs do not adequately reflect radiology’s consultative, episodic role in patient care.

The ROOT Act: A Targeted Solution

The Appropriate Use Criteria (AUC) program, established under PAMA of 2014, was intended to promote evidence-based ordering of advanced diagnostic imaging but has been indefinitely delayed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) due to operational challenges with implementation of real-time claims processing.

The ROOT Act (H.R. 5737) would modernize and enable implementation of the AUC program by facilitating real-time clinical decision support tools, eliminating real-time claims processing, improving data exchange, and maintaining evidence-based guidelines. Full implementation is expected to provide roughly \$2 billion in savings to Medicare over 10 years, with a corresponding \$1.5 billion reduction in reduced out-of-pocket costs to beneficiaries while improving imaging appropriateness and reducing unnecessary utilization.

Radiology plays a critical role in improving patient outcomes. The ACR strongly recommends enacting the ROOT Act and advancing broader payment reforms to ensure sustainability, reduce healthcare costs, and improve access to care.

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