

January 16th, 2026

Michael Repka, MD, MBA
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Dear Dr. Repka,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss with us the evolving roll of Office-Based Surgery (OBS) in Ophthalmology. We recognize that this transition threatens the *status quo*, which can be challenging for a large organization like the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO).

Nonetheless, significant pressures within the healthcare community – such as anesthesia shortages and unprecedented fees, restricted facility surgical time, limited patient access, and rising costs due to health care consolidation – are accelerating the transition of ophthalmic surgical care into the office setting. Our reasons for moving surgery to the office setting are diverse, yet we have universally concluded that OBS is not only appropriate, it is a better model of care. Our *accredited* OBS suites adhere to the highest safety guidelines, and our data confirms the excellent safety record of OBS. Ultimately, the experience is better for patients, surgeons, and staff alike. Most importantly, patients appreciate the convenience, feel less fear, and are now requesting OBS. We encourage you to visit our sites to see the advantages for yourself.

The AAO plays a vital role in shaping our field and OBS will be an increasingly significant part of *ALL* of our futures. *Proactive* advocacy from the AAO is essential to facilitating a positive transition to OBS for your members. Specifically, we need your help to secure an enhanced professional fee for OBS services from CMS. This would validate OBS and streamline the current, burdensome payment process.

We understand your concerns that revaluation of cataract payments could lead to declining reimbursement for professional fees. Yet, despite AAO's strong advocacy on our behalf, declining professional payments have been a consistent reality. It is our viewpoint that AAO's advocacy for OBS provides a unique opportunity for the organization to secure a better future for ophthalmology.

A growing number of your members are moving to OBS and requesting your support. While these issues may not be paramount for all members – especially academicians and those employed through health systems – OBS represents a key innovation that has not only been shown to improve care but to also lower costs.

We are proud to lead this charge and would appreciate your support.

Kind regards,

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