

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2014

Ms. Marilyn Tavenner
Administrator & Chief Operating Officer
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Tavenner:

As members of the U.S. House GOP Doctors Caucus, we are a unique voice in Congress for the experiences of physicians and nurses and the needs of patients across the country.

We strongly support Medicare Advantage (MA) as a valued program that improves the health of America's seniors and lowers health care spending. We are concerned with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) cutting MA program funding in the 2015 Advance Notice by at least 5.9%, which was released on February 21, 2014.

These proposed cuts would be in addition to the severe 2014 cuts made by CMS that are causing disruption for seniors currently. Although seniors consistently report high satisfaction with the MA program, CMS imposed a 6.7% funding cut in the 2014 Final Call Letter. This is in addition to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which cuts \$200 billion from MA. As a result, MA beneficiaries face higher out-of-pocket-costs, limited access to providers, and reduced benefits this year alone. Further, 5% of MA plans withdrew from the market - the first market exit in nearly five years.

With 40% of MA beneficiaries having annual incomes of less than \$20,000, they cannot bear additional cuts. The MA program helps providers coordinate care for patients through innovative programs that manage complex chronic conditions, promote wellness and prevention, and deliver other benefits beyond those available under fee-for-service Medicare.

In MA, medical professionals deliver higher quality care using tools that enhance patient-provider communications, reducing hospitalizations by over 20% and individual patient health care costs by over \$10,000 each year. Through heightened collaboration, providers identify treatment gaps and deliver needed follow-up care to MA beneficiaries, decreasing emergency department visits by 20 to 30%.

Seniors deserve stability and consistency in their MA benefits. We strongly urge you to keep 2015 MA payment rates flat to ensure that the 15 million seniors enrolled in MA will continue to receive uninterrupted access to these health care benefits – America's seniors are counting on us.

Sincerely,

Renee L. Ellmers NC-02

Renee L. Ellmers
Member of Congress

Phil Roe

Phil Roe
Member of Congress

Phil Gingrey

Phil Gingrey
Member of Congress

Diane Black

Diane Black
Member of Congress

C.W. Boustany

Charles Boustany
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Bill Cassidy

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Andy Harris

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Dan Benishek


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Member of Congress



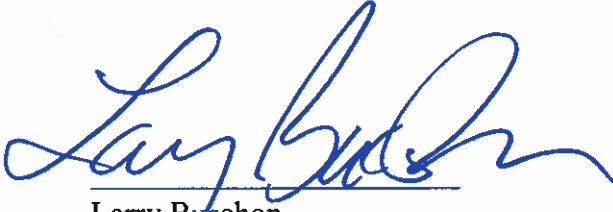
Joe Heck
Member of Congress




Brad Wenstrup
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Scott DesJarlais
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Larry Buschon
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Tim Murphy
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John Fleming
Member of Congress