

February XX, 2017

Dr. Patrick Conway  
Acting Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 445-G  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Acting Administrator Conway:

We write to express our strong support for the Medicare Advantage (MA) program and the high-quality care it provides to nearly 18 million seniors and individuals with disabilities. With over 90 percent of beneficiaries reporting high satisfaction, and the Medicare Trustees predicting future participation growth, we ask that the agency continue to implement policies that preserve and strengthen this valuable program as it finalizes the proposals recently released in the 2018 60-Day Notice and Draft Call Letter.

The Medicare Advantage program is improving quality and efficiency throughout the health care system and reducing the cost of the Medicare program for taxpayers by delivering higher value care and producing better outcomes for beneficiaries. Medicare Advantage practices and approaches to care management do not just benefit Medicare Advantage enrollees – they “spill over” into the traditional Medicare program as well. Research suggests that as a result of these innovative and effective plan techniques, growth in Medicare Advantage enrollment actually slows the growth of costs in traditional Medicare, particularly in areas of the country where MA is popular.

Now, more than ever, it is important to preserve the program’s coverage integrity and existing incentives for Medicare Advantage plans to offer efficient, person-centered managed care to seniors. For example, the Final 2018 Rate Notice and Call Letter should provide sound funding that keeps pace with expected medical costs.

The Medicare Advantage program continues to be of value to both taxpayers and seniors. The program also gives plans the flexibility to offer additional care coordination and disease management programs, as well as assistance in accessing community-based resources not always available in traditional Medicare. For this reason, we urge you to maintain existing protections for beneficiaries, provide a stable and predictable level of funding for the program, and to the greatest extent possible limit regulatory requirements that may result in increased administrative burden or reduced access to beneficiaries. Please know we will continue to closely monitor the changes this administration makes to the MA program.

Sincerely,

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BRETT GUTHRIE  
Member of Congress

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TONY CÀRDENAS  
Member of Congress

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ERIK PAULSEN  
Member of Congress

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EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress