

BETTER MEDICARE

ALLIANCE

December 9, 2016

President-elect Donald J. Trump
Trump-Pence Transition Team
1717 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Vice President-elect Mike Pence
Trump-Pence Transition Team
1717 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President-elect Trump and Vice President-elect Pence:

We are writing to introduce Better Medicare Alliance (BMA) and highlight the advocacy work we do to support and strengthen Medicare Advantage on behalf our alliance. Medicare Advantage is leading the way in modernizing Medicare and we are eager to build on its achievements. We look forward to working with you and your Administration, as well as Congress, to strengthen Medicare Advantage and prevent disruption in the program that 1 in 3 beneficiaries depend on for their Medicare.

BMA is an alliance of over 75 organizations, including health plans, providers, health systems, aging service agencies, business groups, as well as beneficiaries, who support and advocate for Medicare Advantage. Our key goals are to ensure the program is stable, accessible, high quality, cost effective, and financially viable through ongoing support of policymakers. We achieve these goals through education, commentary, and advocacy, based on research, analysis, and the experiences of our ally organizations and beneficiaries. We are a resource to policymakers on and off the Hill on all aspects of Medicare Advantage policy.

Medicare Advantage is an option within Medicare that allows seniors and individuals with disabilities to choose a private plan to receive their Medicare benefits, instead of receiving coverage through Traditional Fee-For-Service (FFS) Medicare. Medicare Advantage has grown by over 65% since 2010, with over 18 million Americans now enrolled in the program and the number continues to grow. Medicare Advantage also has strong bipartisan support. Over 400 Representatives and Senators on both sides of the aisle signed letters in support of Medicare Advantage in 2016.

Beneficiaries are choosing Medicare Advantage because they appreciate the affordability, simplicity, consumer choice, and enhanced benefits the program offers. In 2016, the average Medicare beneficiary was able to choose from 19 plans.¹ Medicare Advantage beneficiaries are highly satisfied, with 91% of beneficiaries reporting satisfaction with their coverage.²

Providers and policymakers support Medicare Advantage because it provides a more effective framework to care for our country's growing Medicare population. There are 10,000 seniors aging into Medicare every day. In the next 10 years, the number of Medicare beneficiaries will grow by over 30% to roughly 75 million people.³ While Traditional FFS Medicare was designed for short episodes of acute illness and expensive hospitalizations, the capitated system in Medicare Advantage incentivizes better care management for chronic conditions.

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation. Medicare Advantage 2016 Data Spotlight: Overview of Plan Changes. December 3, 2015. [Web.](#)

² Better Medicare Alliance, The Winston Group. Recent Survey on Medicare Advantage. February 24-28, 2015.

³ Congressional Budget Office. Congressional Budget Office's March 2016 Medicare Baseline. March 24, 2016. [Web.](#)

BETTER MEDICARE

ALLIANCE

Data show that by emphasizing early intervention and better care coordination Medicare Advantage directs beneficiaries to the most appropriate site of care and prevents adverse, high-cost events such as avoidable hospitalizations. Research also finds the positive impact Medicare Advantage is having on care delivery is spilling over to Traditional FFS Medicare resulting in reduced hospital costs to the system.^{4,5,6} Medicare Advantage is leading the way in transforming Medicare with value-based payment arrangements between plans, providers, and community partners. To strengthen Medicare Advantage, we recommend the following policies:

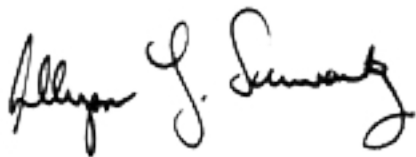
- Avoid disruption to the program and support policies that maintain and encourage the growth of Medicare Advantage.
- Keep payment and risk adjustment accurate and stable.
- Continue to incentivize quality using the Star Rating Quality System.
- Increase transparency by publicly releasing more impact analyses and data.
- Encourage flexibility of benefits to enable the use of advances like telemedicine, care in the home, and appropriate social service supports.

As the Administration and the new Congress work to meet your health reform goals, we ask that you view Medicare Advantage as a bright spot of success and bipartisan agreement. Both Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate, as well as plans, providers, and millions of beneficiaries all recognize the value of Medicare Advantage. It is a public-private partnership that works. It is leading the way in value-based care for millions of beneficiaries, many of whom have complex health needs. It is working to meet the goals of cost efficiency and high quality care.

We welcome the opportunity to share evidence and analysis, as well as the perspective and experience of our many ally organizations and beneficiaries with you and your Administration.

We congratulate you and look forward to working together to strengthen Medicare and ensure its continuity as a guarantee for all American seniors and eligible individuals.

Sincerely,



Allyson Y. Schwartz
President & CEO
Better Medicare Alliance

Better Medicare Alliance Allies

⁴ Chernew, M., Decicca, P., & Town, R. (2008). Managed Care and Medical Expenditures of Medicare Beneficiaries. *Journal of Health Economics*, 27(6), 1451-1461. [Web](#).

⁵ Callison, K. (2015). Medicare Managed Care Spillovers and Treatment Intensity. *Health Economics*. 25(7). 785-928. [Web](#).

⁶ Petterson, S., Bazemore, A., Jabbarpour., Wingrove, P. (2016). Understanding the Impact of Medicare Advantage on Hospitalization Rates: A 12-State Study. [Web](#).

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Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics	Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health
Aetna	Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce
Alliance for Aging Research	Healthcare Leadership Council
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists	Health Care Transformation Task Force
American Association of Nurse Practitioners	Health Quality Partners
American Benefits Council	Healthways
American Medical Group Association	Humana
American Nurses Association	Indiana University Health
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association	International Council on Active Aging
American Telemedicine Association	Iora Health
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum	Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness	LeadingAge
Atrius Health	Lehigh Valley Health Network
Banner Health	LIBERTY Dental Plan Foundation
Business Council of New York State	Meals on Wheels America
Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey	Mercy Health
ChenMed	National Association of Dental Plans
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities	National Association of Health Underwriters
Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey	National Association of Manufacturers
Consortium for Older Adult Wellness	National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
Delaware State Chamber of Commerce	National Black Nurses Association
Delta Dental of California, Pennsylvania, New York and Affiliates	National Caucus & Center on Black Aging, Inc.
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce	National Hispanic Council on Aging
Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley	National Hispanic Medical Association
Florida Health Networks	National Medical Association
	National Minority Quality Forum
	National Retail Federation

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NaviHealth

New Jersey Business and Industry Association

New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce

New Jersey State Nurses Association

Northwell Health

Nurse Practitioner's Association of New York State

Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc

Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Pittsburgh Business Group on Health

Population Health Alliance

Senior Resource Alliance

SilverSneakers Fitness

Society for Women's Health

Summa Health

Temple Health

Texas Association of Business

The Garden State Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses

The Gerontological Society of America

The Latino Coalition

UnitedHealth Group

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Virtua

VSP Vision Care

WomenHeart

YMCA of the USA

Better Medicare Alliance (BMA) is the leading coalition of nurses, doctors, health plans, employers, aging service agencies, advocates, retiree organizations, and beneficiaries supporting Medicare Advantage. Medicare Advantage offers quality, affordability and simplicity, with enhanced benefits to more than 17 million Medicare beneficiaries across America. BMA works to ensure the sustainability and stability of Medicare Advantage through information, research, education, and united support among stakeholders to strengthen this important coverage for seniors and people with disabilities.

<http://bettermedicarealliance.org>

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