

BETTER MEDICARE
ALLIANCE

February 17, 2015

Marilyn Tavenner
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD

Dear Administrator Tavenner:

We are writing today because we believe the Medicare Advantage program is a leader in achieving the goals set by the Secretary of value-based payment systems that increase care coordination, improve population health and promote patient engagement. Medicare Advantage provides comprehensive health care coverage to more than 17 million Medicare beneficiaries. The Medicare Advantage program's focus is on prevention, coordinated care, better management of chronic conditions, and new provider payment models that reward value over volume. As a result of these innovations, Medicare Advantage is enhancing seniors' health and well-being, while driving systemic improvements in care delivery.

Recognizing the critical role of Medicare Advantage to so many Medicare beneficiaries, the Better Medicare Alliance was formed to illustrate the value proposition of Medicare Advantage through research and to build support for protecting and strengthening Medicare Advantage.

We are deeply concerned that despite the growing evidence that Medicare Advantage is outperforming fee-for-service Medicare, the program has been subject to significant year-over-year payment cuts each year since 2010. While some of these cuts have come about as a result of the Affordable Care Act, a significant portion of the cuts has resulted from CMS instituting a number of discretionary payment policies. These have been real cuts – not merely reductions in rates of projected growth.

Moreover, while overall health care cost inflation has thankfully been modest during this administration, health care costs have nonetheless continued to rise at the same time that Medicare Advantage has been subject to these real cuts each year since 2010. Our coalition believes that these cuts have been harmful to Medicare beneficiaries and that the program must not be subject to yet another year of cuts.

We urge CMS to stabilize Medicare Advantage payment rates for 2016 to ensure continuity, affordability and peace of mind for the millions of seniors who depend on Medicare Advantage for their care. Thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,



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