



TENNESSEE

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

August 31, 2022

Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health & Human Services
Attn: CMS-4203-NC
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Request for Information on Medicare Program

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

On behalf of the Tennessee Business Roundtable (“Roundtable”), I am submitting these comments to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in response to *CMS-4203-NC* and the request for information on Medicare Advantage.

Our organization is comprised of over four dozen business and nonprofit entities operating throughout the state of Tennessee in over a dozen industry sectors. Since our founding in 1983, our Roundtable has partnered successfully with elected officials along with business, non-profit and academic stakeholders, united by the common goal of creating and promoting pro-business policies that contribute significantly to the success of the Volunteer State’s economy and people.

The Tennessee Business Roundtable believes that our state’s economy succeeds when Tennesseans have the health (including oral and mental health) to perform fully in the workplace and the marketplace. We aspire to create a Tennessee which ranks in the top half of states for improvement in workforce connected health measures. Healthy citizens participate in our state’s workforce at higher rates and are more productive than residents in poor health; those with relatively better health have a relatively higher ability to provide for themselves and their families, and to be net contributors to their communities and to our state’s economy.

Tennessee’s employers provide health coverage to over half of our state’s residents, and our organization is strongly committed to pursuing policies which further expand Tennesseans’ access to health coverage through both employer-sponsored health plans and through expansion of publicly-subsidized coverage. In addition, many of our state’s employers are also committed to supporting the health and well-being of their retirees, including by delivering health benefits through Medicare Advantage under Employer Group Waiver Plans (EGWPs).

More broadly, Medicare Advantage plans are affordable and accessible health options for nearly 700,000 Tennesseans.¹ These beneficiaries spend about \$2,000 less² on out-of-pocket costs and premiums compared to those covered by Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) plans. These savings are meaningful for Tennessee seniors living on fixed incomes. Moreover, Medicare Advantage’s additional benefits - including vision and dental, coverage of prescription drugs, and access to telehealth – contribute significantly to improved health care outcomes for Tennessee’s seniors.

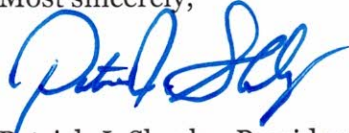
The Tennessee Business Roundtable believes that the enhanced affordability, accessibility, and quality of health coverage available to our state’s seniors through programs like Medicare Advantage contribute significantly to the overall health of our state’s residents, to the strength of our state’s economy, and to the stability and success of Tennessee’s families and communities.

¹ Better Medicare Alliance: TN Enrollment Map

² Better Medicare Alliance: Medicare Advantage Outperforms FFS Medicare on Cost Protections for Low-Income and Diverse Populations (April 2022)

We ask you, CMS, the Department, and the Administration to keep our views in mind while considering potential policy enhancements to the Medicare Advantage program, and to adopt policy supports and innovations which strengthen MA over the long term for the benefit of thousands of Tennesseans and millions of our fellow Americans.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Sheehy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Patrick J. Sheehy, President