

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 17, 2016

Andrew Slavitt
Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 314-G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Administrator Slavitt,

As CMS develops the preliminary Medicare Advantage and Part D program policies for 2017, we urge you to minimize disruptions to beneficiaries by avoiding further payment cuts to Medicare Advantage. Protecting this program will maintain stable coverage options for the hundreds of thousands of Medicare beneficiaries in Washington state that choose Medicare Advantage.

Medicare Advantage continues to be an incredibly popular option for Washington seniors and individuals with disabilities because of the high quality, innovative and coordinated care they receive through these plans. Due to seniors' overwhelming satisfaction with the Medicare Advantage program, enrollment has grown steadily in Washington over the past five years. Out of the approximately 1.2 million individuals eligible for Medicare in Washington, the number of beneficiaries choosing Medicare Advantage over traditional fee-for-service, has increased from almost 250,000 in 2010 to nearly 360,000 in 2015. Medicare Advantage is now making a difference in the health and quality of life of nearly 30 percent of seniors and individuals with disabilities in Washington.

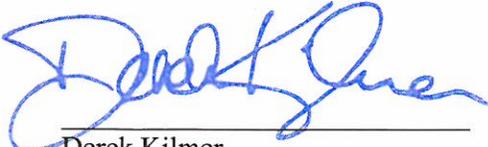
Medicare Advantage plans have a long history of focusing on prevention and early detection of chronic diseases as part of a patient-centered approach to care. They also provide a critical health care safety net for thousands of beneficiaries in Washington with low incomes or complex health needs. Approximately 25,000 Medicare beneficiaries who choose Medicare Advantage in the state are enrolled in Special Needs Plans, which are specifically designed to address the needs of these financially vulnerable individuals as well as those who have multiple chronic conditions.

We believe it is critically important to preserve and protect Washington seniors' option of choosing the best Medicare plan to meet their needs. We hope you will strengthen and ensure stability in the Medicare Advantage program, for the hundreds of thousands of seniors in our state counting on the continued availability of their Medicare Advantage plans.

Sincerely,


Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

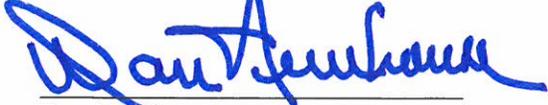

Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Suzan DeBene
Member of Congress



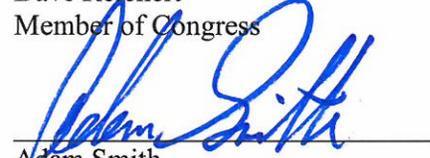
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