

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 6, 2018

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Verma:

We write to express our strong support for Medicare Advantage (MA) and, as 10,000 Medicare beneficiaries enter the Medicare program each day, we encourage you to strengthen and enhance educational outreach related to MA to ensure Medicare-eligible seniors have a thorough and factual understanding of the health care coverage options available to them. We support continued efforts by the Administration to enhance the information and decision-making tools available to Medicare beneficiaries to better enable them to make informed choices about their health care.

As you know, MA is popular among the more than 20 million beneficiaries nationwide who actively choose it, with a 91% satisfaction rate. The high degree of satisfaction with MA is a function of the value it offers to seniors and individuals with disabilities compared to Fee-For-Service Medicare (FFS). Nearly all MA plans offer care coordination, benefits and services that are not offered in FFS, including vision, hearing, fitness and wellness, and dental benefits. MA also drives affordability by reducing premiums and including an out-of-pocket maximum, which helps protect senior and disabled beneficiaries from potential catastrophic health care expenses that could threaten their financial security.

However, it is becoming increasingly evident that Medicare-eligible seniors are not sufficiently informed about their health care coverage choices. According to recent research, only 33% of seniors were aware that MA was a health care coverage option at the time of becoming Medicare-eligible. Furthermore, nearly one-third of seniors report feeling uncertain about what resources are available to help them research their health care coverage, and two-thirds of seniors currently enrolled in FFS were not aware of MA as an option.¹

Given that over one-third of Medicare beneficiaries have incomes at or below 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)², we believe it is especially important that Medicare beneficiaries have all the tools they need to make informed coverage decisions that best meet their overall health and financial needs. We believe that CMS has a unique opportunity to improve awareness through education about the MA coverage option, in order to ensure seniors know and can easily access their health care coverage choices.

¹ Morning Consult national survey of 2,000 Medicare-eligible older Americans, July, 2017.

² Kaiser Family Foundation. "Distribution of Medicare Beneficiaries by Federal Poverty Level" (2016). [Web](#).

We encourage CMS, under your leadership, to use all the available tools at your disposal to improve, accelerate, and enhance education efforts to raise awareness of MA among America's seniors, especially as they age into Medicare. We look forward to working with you on specific ideas to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,



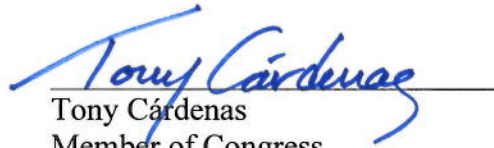
Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress