

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 24, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We write to you to express our concerns about the policies outlined in the 2016 Medicare Advantage (MA) call letter and advance rate notice released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) this past Friday. We are troubled by the policies in this regulation, which we believe will lead to millions of seniors facing fewer choices, higher costs, and plan cancellations.

While your administration expresses support for the MA program rhetorically and takes credit for increased enrollment, this year, another round of cuts from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) will take effect. Moreover, the policy changes outlined last Friday will only intensify the problems already caused by your administration's cuts to the program in recent years.

We are disappointed with your administration's record on Medicare. Instead of working with Congress to strengthen the program and protect seniors, your administration has ignored its promise that seniors can keep the plans they have and like. Instead, PPACA raided the MA program to spend money on new government programs not for seniors.

Today, nearly one third of seniors have come to rely on MA plans. According to the Congressional Research Service, MA plans serve a greater percentage of low-income and minority beneficiaries than fee-for-service Medicare—so cuts to the program disproportionately impact these populations. By many measures, the MA program provides higher-quality and more coordinated care than traditional fee-for-service Medicare. At the same time, millions of seniors enjoy low premiums and abundant choices of benefits and services.


We are concerned that the policies in PPACA and this most recent rule will further reduce seniors' choices while increasing their costs. This concern is well-founded, as your own actuaries at CMS have warned that cuts could cause up to 7 million of the nearly 16 million seniors in MA to lose their plans by 2017.

We remain ready to work with you to stop the harmful effects caused by another round of cuts to seniors' health care benefits. We urge you not to finalize the policies in the proposed rule but rather work with Congress to strengthen and stabilize the Medicare Advantage program.

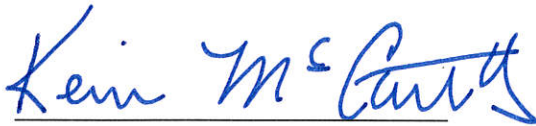
Sincerely,



JOHN BOEHNER
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives



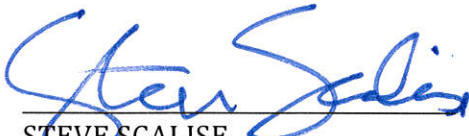
MITCH MCCONNELL
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate




KEVIN MCCARTHY
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives



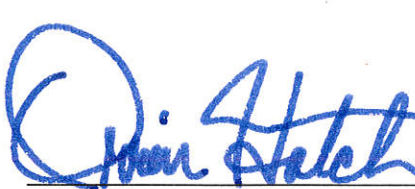
JOHN CORNYN
Whip
U.S. Senate




STEVE SCALISE
Whip
U.S. House of Representatives




CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS
Chairman
House Republican Conference



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Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
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Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives



FRED UPTON
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Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives