

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2017

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Dear Administrator Verma,

We are writing on behalf of the 370,000 beneficiaries in Minnesota that are currently enrolled in Medicare Cost Plans to express our concern regarding the Medicare Cost Plan transition that will occur in 2019.

Today, there are 16 Medicare Cost Plans across the country with over 600,000 members, over half of which are in Minnesota, and many are scheduled to transition coverage on January 1, 2019. The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) phased out Medicare Cost Plans and put in place a multi-year transition period to phase out Medicare Cost Plans. These Cost plans have offered decades of services for seniors in our state since 1972 by ensuring access to private health plans for beneficiaries living in rural areas and areas where Medicare Advantage (MA) penetration has traditionally been low or not available. Today, we write in favor of steps to limit disruption for Minnesota Medicare beneficiaries.

What steps has the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) taken to provide maximum flexibility and thorough information to Minnesotans on Medicare options? Many individuals may not be aware of the changes coming, and early notification as to their options is essential in order to limit confusion on behalf of seniors.

We also request CMS detail the additional steps the agency will be taking in advance of the transition to ensure a timely and effective notice of these changes, and to limit confusion. We believe it is critical that CMS provide thorough information about this transition so Minnesotans can remain comfortable with their coverage as they age.

Minnesotans have experienced significant disruption in both individual and Medicaid plans in the past year. With these changes, Minnesota Medicare beneficiaries must have access to a high-quality Medicare option that meets their needs. We are in a high-quality region for Medicare and hope that MA prospects are improved for all parts of Minnesota in the future. Efforts to grow these plans will help ensure seniors in Minnesota have access to high-quality health care options.

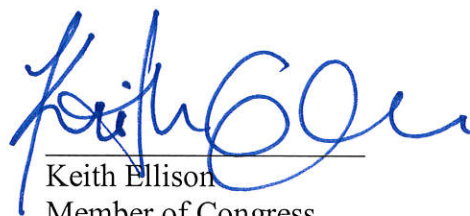
The Minnesota delegation has continuously worked to support Medicare beneficiaries and protect their access to care. We ask that CMS provide details to us on the regulatory options available to limit disruption for Cost Plan beneficiaries and provide the greatest level of choices for Minnesota seniors.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter and we look forward to discussing next steps as soon as possible.

Respectfully,



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Jason Lewis
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Rick Nolan
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Tim Walz
Member of Congress