

June 17, 2015

Senate Finance Committee Chronic Care Workgroup
US Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senators Hatch, Wyden, Isakson and Warner,

As a public librarian, I saw more than 1500 customers each day. Now I am retired and surrounded by friends and family age 65 and older. It is my observation that chronic disease is the issue that most impacts quality of life for many Americans and increases the costs of the Medicare program. There are changes that individuals can make that will improve their quality of life and keep them out of emergency rooms and other health care facilities. The challenge is getting the information to the patients at the time when they need it most.

I am writing to ask the Chronic Care workgroup to support a program ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries have access to evidence based self-management programs for chronic disease, pain management, fall prevention and physical activity which will result in improved quality of care, improved disease management and lower per capita costs. Specifically, I am asking you to support Medicare funding the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), for older adults with chronic disease. I am confident that you have received multiple communications with return on investment statistics, etc. I, however, am a layperson and can only report on the positive impact this program has made in the lives of friends and family members.

With sustainable funding and increased awareness of this program true progress can be made.

I urge the Chronic Care Workgroup to recommend CDSMP be provided by community-based organizations to all Medicare recipients as the standard self-management approach for beneficiaries with one or more chronic diseases. This program makes a difference.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Julia Clarke