



QUALITY CARE HOSPICE

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Urbanización Constanca paseo Las Colonias
Número 1805 Suite 4 Ponce, Puerto Rico



United States Senators

RE: Hospice Opposes Inclusion in Medicare Advantage

Dear Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, Senator Isakson and Senator Warner:

As a hospice advocate from Ponce, Puerto Rico, I oppose a proposal by the Senate Chronic Care Working Group that would include hospice under Medicare Advantage. This "carve-in" could negatively impact hospices and their patients in the following ways:

Limiting patient choice:

-Patients choose a hospice based on a range of clinical, emotional and spiritual factors. This decision should not be limited based on narrow, in-network requirements. Further, hospice patients do not have the time to fill out burdensome paperwork, wait for administrative approval or change plans.

Diluting the quality and integrity of the hospice benefit:

-Hospice employ a team of physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, volunteers and others to address all of the patient's clinical, psychological, spiritual and family needs. This integrated approach could be a casualty of "bottom-line" focused administration.

Increasing administrative and financial burden on hospices:

-Rather than a single claims process, hospices would be required to negotiate, manage and process claims from many plans. One hospice posits that this change could nearly triple their administrative costs. Additionally, MA plans are slower to pay claims, and would likely cut hospice rates. This delay and lower payment would require hospices to have much larger cash reserves, increase their interest charges, and threaten their financial viability.

Please encourage your colleagues on the Chronic Care Working Group to reject this controversial proposal, and in its place, encourage them to adopt S. 1549, the Care Planning Act.

For more information about end-of-life care, the MA carve-in, or the Care Planning Act, please contact the Hospice Action Network at info@nhpcohan.org. Thank you for your support of hospice.

Miriam F. Aviles
President