

Senate Finance Committee Chronic Care Workgroup

US Senate

Washington, D.C.

Dear Senators Hatch, Wyden, Isakson and Warner,

There are increasing numbers of people in the United States with chronic disease. It is the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S. and account for over 79% of the nation's health care spending. As has been noted by the Senate Finance Chronic Care Workgroup, we need to find ways to provide high quality of care at greater value and lower cost without adding to the deficit.

Patients spend 1 hour with their doctor every year and the other 8759 hours by themselves in their homes and communities. Self efficacy, or self-management is heralded as a key component in the improvement of health outcomes associated with chronic disease. According to the Institute of Medicine, self-management is defined as "the tasks that individuals must undertake to live well with one or more chronic conditions". There has been very little focus by health plans, including Medicare and Medicaid, on the role of the individual in proactively managing their health conditions and taking more responsibility for improving their personal behaviors that will result in improved health outcomes and lower costs. I am asking for the Chronic Care workgroup support for Medicare beneficiaries to 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. In particular, I am requesting that you to support Medicare funding the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), for older adults with chronic disease. CDSMP is one of the best known and most researched evidence-based programs and is a good model for people with multiple chronic conditions, as research studies have demonstrated positive changes in self-efficacy, health behaviors, physical and psychological health status, and symptom management while reducing costs of care.

I urge the Chronic Care Workgroup to recommend CDSMP be provided by community-based organizations to all health care providers, organization and systems as the fundamental self-management approach for Medicare beneficiaries with one or more chronic diseases. These programs will allow individuals to live with the dignity and independence they want to have, having their health care needs met reliably and well, and with the costs being sustainable for our country.

Sincerely yours,

Gabriel García, MD

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"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."  
Mohandas K. Gandhi