

Senate Finance Committee Chronic Care Workgroup
US Senate
Washington, D.C.
June 22, 2015

Dear Senators Hatch, Wyden, Isakson and Warner,

I am writing in support of your effort to 'find ways to provide high quality of care at greater value and lower cost without adding to the deficit'. I represent the San Francisco Healthier Living Coalition, who offer the Stanford University CDSMP 'evidence based' workshops throughout our neighborhoods, especially the underserved and seniors, to show them how to better self manage their chronic condition. The workshops are free in English, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Tagalog and we also train volunteer lay leaders to facilitate the workshops. During the 2 year ARRA grant (2010-2012)) we graduated 600+ participants through 50+ workshops. In the following 3 years since then, we graduated 1200+ through 120+ workshops. We serve a culturally diverse population and offer workshops through senior centers, senior housing, assisted living ,YMCA's, libraries, homeless housing site, veteran sites and any organization who feels their clients will benefit. In addition, leaders have been rewarded with personal anecdotes and bonding of the graduates. One graduate's social interaction consisted of attending the workshop. Another quiet graduate set a goal of practicing the piano and , performed an impromptu recital, mistakes and all, at the last graduation workshop session.

As you have noted in your stakeholder letter dated May 22, 2015, 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. In fact, the most common chronic disease experienced by adults is multimorbidity, the coexistence of multiple chronic diseases.

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

We urge the 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, we ask you to support Medicare funding for the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) for older adults with chronic disease. CDSMP is one of the most well-known and researched evidence-based programs, 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 as well as reduced per capita costs of health care with an approximate 2:1 return on investment in the first year as noted in a national study published in 2013. This equates to a potential net savings of \$364 per participant and a national savings of \$3.3 billion if 5% of adults with one or more chronic conditions are reached. These programs should be a patient covered benefit provided to patients and integrated with care traditionally given by health care providers. Thank you for your efforts.

Ken Wong

Ken Wong
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