



The Leader in Digital Health Self-Management
1539 Sawtelle Boulevard, Suite 10
Los Angeles, CA 90025

January 25, 2016

Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance

Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance

Honorable Jonny Isaksson
Co-Chairman
Chronic Care Working Group
United States Senate

Honorable Mark Warner
Co-Chairman
Chronic Care Working Group
United States Senate

Re: Comments on Senate Finance Committee Chronic Care Policy Options Paper

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, and Senators Isaksson and Warner:

I appreciate the opportunity to submit the following comments on behalf of Canary Health. I am thankful that you have chosen to take an open and bipartisan approach in seeking solutions to some of the most pressing chronic care problems. Canary Health is the leading company focused on using digital technologies to help health plans, providers and employers reduce the cost of care for people with, or at risk for, one or more chronic conditions. Our proven health self-management programs (addressing lifestyle, stress and chronic condition management) effectively guide people toward enduring behavior change and improve business and health outcomes.

Canary Health's comments are focused on ways to advance self-management interventions for chronic conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis. While the Policy Options Paper does take some positive steps to improve Medicare treatment of chronic diseases, it does not include necessary proposals to enable Medicare to support research-proven-effective self-management support interventions through a variety of communication channels (e.g., in-person, online, cell-phone). These programs have demonstrable impacts on health by increasing an individual's self-efficacy – an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute and sustain the healthy behaviors necessary to improve health outcomes.

There are a number of CMS approved programs (e.g., Stanford's Chronic Disease Self-management program (CDSMP) which have been supported over the past decades by a variety of federal programs. Some online versions of CDSMP have been approved as evidence-based

and effective by the Department of Health and Human Service (e.g., ACL approval of online CDSMP for diabetes and arthritis). The Committee should consider ways to ensure Medicare can be used for these evidence-based programs (in-person and online). This will expand self-management to all who would benefit.

Canary Health supports the Working Group's consideration to allow Medicare Part B payments for evidence-based lifestyle interventions that help people with prediabetes reduce their risk of developing diabetes. We believe that Medicare payments should be available for any private sector companies, or non-profit entities, with proven, rigorous and verifiable intensive lifestyle interventions which have demonstrated they help individuals with, or at risk for, type 2 diabetes or treat their diabetes. With respect to the Working Group's question of oversight, at present, CDC recognizes in-person and digital providers of intensive lifestyle interventions as part of the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP). Thus, we are confident federal agencies can use existing regulatory frameworks to ensure adequate oversight of both non-profit and private sector companies.

Canary Health strongly supports the comments and recommendations of others dedicated to chronic care issues, including the National Council on Aging. Through implementation and expansion of the provisions in the Policy Paper, the Committee has the opportunity to increase the number of entries providing effective prevention and chronic disease self-management interventions for the millions of Americans suffering from one or more chronic conditions. I and the team at Canary Health stand ready to work with you on this effort. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Neal Kaufman, MD, MPH
Founder and Chief Medical Officer, Canary Health
Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health
UCLA

nkaufman@canaryhealth.com

Office: 310 444 0636 ext. 111

Mobile: 310 963 2780

For more information visit canaryhealth.com