

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 31, 2019

Seema Verma, MPH
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 445-G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma:

We write to express our strong support for Medicare Advantage and the high-quality care it provides to more than 21 million seniors and individuals with disabilities. We appreciate the Administration's recognition of the value of Medicare Advantage and its work to encourage innovation for these private health plans. As annual updates are considered for 2020, we ask you to continue to strengthen and grow this proven part of the Medicare program by proposing policies that provide stability and predictability.

Millions of our constituents depend on Medicare Advantage for quality, patient-centered health care. Beneficiary enthusiasm for the program remains strong, with more than one in three seniors enrolled. This is due, in part, to private plans' ability to leverage best practices in care delivery, use robust data analytics, and implement proven value-based care and care management models. Medicare Advantage enrollees report a 91 percent satisfaction rate, with 74 percent of enrollees in plans rated four Stars and above.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently announced average Medicare Advantage premiums are estimated to decrease by six percent in 2019. Meanwhile, beneficiary enrollment has increased by eight percent in the past year and 79 percent since 2010, a testament to the affordability, high-quality care coordination, disease management and community-based programs, and supplemental benefits such as vision and dental coverage provided by Medicare Advantage plans. Further, bipartisan efforts are helping to reduce beneficiary costs by increasing the use of telemedicine, promoting value-based insurance design, and expanding benefits that address social determinants of health by including transportation, nutrition, and other non-medical needs that enhance quality of life.

For plan year 2020, we encourage the Administration to implement policies that promote innovation, provide predictable funding to support long-term, value-based arrangements, and ensure that any substantive changes include sufficient time for thorough evaluation and stakeholder engagement.

Sincerely,



Mike Crapo
U.S. Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
U.S. Senator



Johnny Isakson
U.S. Senator



John Cornyn
U.S. Senator



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U.S. Senator



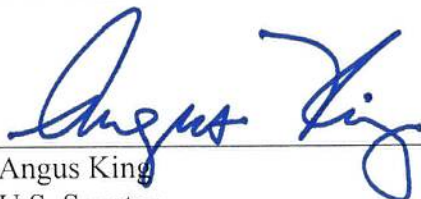
Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senator



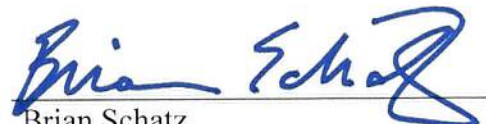
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John Barrasso, M.D.
U.S. Senator


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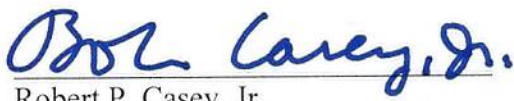

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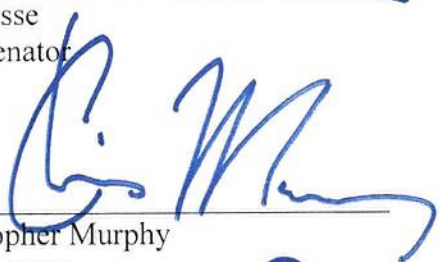
Marco Rubio
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Ben Sasse
U.S. Senator



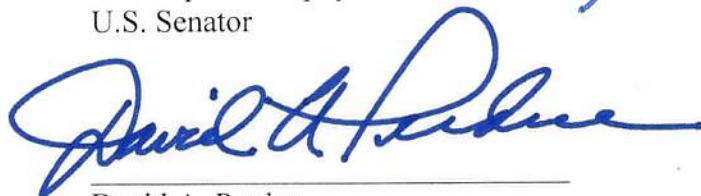
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator



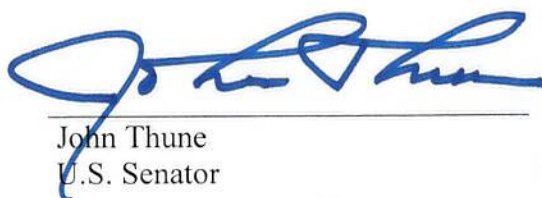
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David A. Perdue
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John Thune
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Shelley Moore Capito
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Steve Daines
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Ron Johnson
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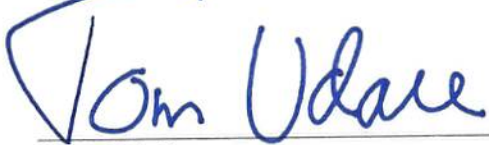
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James Lankford
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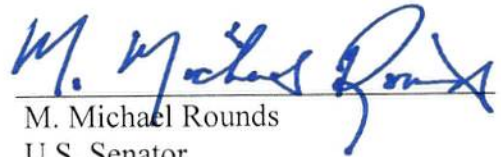
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Lindsey O. Graham
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M. Michael Rounds
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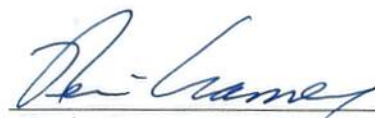
Michael B. Enzi
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Martha McSally
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Mike Braun
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Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator