

August 8, 2014

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

The undersigned organizations support the *Medicare Advantage Participant Bill of Rights Act of 2014* (H.R. 4998), and we urge you to co-sponsor this legislation and help advance it through Congress. Passage of the legislation would benefit the nearly 16 million seniors and people with disabilities currently receiving their health care from Medicare Advantage (MA) plans as well as those who may enroll in MA in the future.

More and more frequently, MA plans are dropping doctors and other health care providers from their networks, often in the middle of the plan year. While MA plans are permitted to alter their provider networks at any time, beneficiaries and their providers often receive little advance notice about these changes. This can be especially problematic for beneficiaries who have a long-standing relationship with their doctors or who are in the midst of a serious illness and do not want to switch medical providers.

The *Medicare Advantage Participant Bill of Rights Act* aims to protect beneficiaries from losing their doctors in the middle of the plan year and to improve the transparency of MA plans. This legislation would:

- Prohibit MA plans from dropping providers, without cause, during the middle of the plan year;
- Require MA plans to finalize their provider networks for the subsequent plan year at least 60 days in advance of the annual enrollment period;
- Provide increased notice to beneficiaries and providers when MA plans change their provider networks;
- Increase transparency by requiring MA plans to publicly disclose the factors they use in designing their networks;
- Require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to reevaluate its network adequacy evaluation process by consulting with relevant stakeholders, including providers, MA plans, and beneficiary groups; and
- Improve the information available for seniors to compare MA plans on the CMS Medicare Advantage Compare tools.

As consumer advocates representing millions of older adults and people with disabilities, we believe that beneficiaries enrolled in MA plans should not have to worry about losing their doctors suddenly. With respect to MA plans, we support additional consumer protections, such as those outlined in the *Medicare Advantage Participant Bill of Rights Act*, and hope that you will co-sponsor this important legislation.

Sincerely,

ACCSES
AFSCME
AFT RETIREES
Alliance for a Just Society
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association on Health and Disability
American Society on Aging
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP)
B'nai B'rith
Brain Injury Association of America
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Community Catalyst
FamiliesUSA
Medicare Rights Center
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
OWL-The Voice of Women 40+
Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
The Arc of the United States
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER)