

Dear Chairman Dingell and Chairman Rangel:

The Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. (the Center) is pleased to support H.R. 6331, the House Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act. The Center is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works to ensure fair access to Medicare and quality healthcare. I am the founder and executive director.

H.R. 6331 is good for beneficiaries all around. It ensures access to medical care by preventing the Medicare fee cut for doctors set to become effective on July 1. It adds significant improvements in Medicare by reducing cost-sharing for mental health services, by making it easier for Medicare to pay for preventive services, and by increasing asset levels to help beneficiaries qualify for premium assistance.

In addition, H.R. 6331 improves choice and access to health care providers by changing the network requirements for Medicare Advantage Private Fee-For-Service (PFFS) plan. The Center has been contacted by Medicare beneficiaries from across the country who no longer have access to doctors or hospitals as a result of their enrollment in a PFFS plan.

The modification included in H.R. 6331 to the PFFS "deeming" requirement will help enable these individuals to get the health care they are guaranteed as Medicare beneficiaries.

Thank you again for including coverage and cost-sharing improvements in H.R. 6331. In these difficult financial times the needs of the people for whom the Medicare program was established - older people and people with disabilities - cannot, and should not, be ignored as Congress addresses the payment cut for doctors. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff if we can be of assistance.

With best regards,

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