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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

December 13, 2007

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor
State of Washington
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0100

Dear Governor Gregoire:

We urgently ask you to reverse your support for Congressional proposals targeting the future existence of the Wenatchee Valley Medical Center (WVMC) and the health care choices of thousands of seniors across Washington state.

In August, you supported passage of House legislation (H.R. 3152, the CHAMP Act) that would effectively outlaw the Wenatchee Valley Medical Center as it exists today and eliminate the Medicare health plan choices of 125,000 Washington seniors.

The House and Senate are expected to consider similar legislation at any time. We ask for your assistance in stopping these Congressional threats to health care access in Washington state.

The Wenatchee Valley Medical Center was established in 1940 by three doctors. Today it is jointly owned by 150 doctors, employs 1500 people serving 150,000 patients a year through its primary facility in Wenatchee, as well as clinics in East Wenatchee, Moses Lake, Cashmere, Omak, Oroville, Royal City and Tonasket.

The bill you supported would cut-off WVMC from receiving federal funds for treating Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, which makes up over 50% of the care it provides each year, simply because it is 100% owned by doctors. The result of such a cut would be devastating. This 67 year-old institution should not be forced by Congress to close, sell, or freeze services forever. The State of Washington has designated WVMC as a "critical need hospital" serving a rural, underserved area. This hospital has 250,000 Washington residents in its coverage area and needs to be protected, not put at risk because of policies to ban doctors from owning a hospital.

While this affects only Eastern Washington, the bill also could eliminate the health care choices of 125,000 seniors living across Washington state by cutting Medicare Advantage plans. Seniors living in rural areas would be hit hardest. We ask that you reverse your support for such Medicare cuts and oppose Congressional efforts to take away seniors' health care choices.

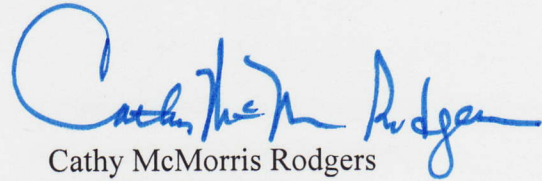
You've made it a practice to actively and routinely write letters to both Congressional leaders and Washington's Congressional delegation on matters you believe are important to Washington state. We believe the fate of the Wenatchee Valley Medical Center and the health care choices of 125,000 seniors deserve the Governor's personal involvement.

Please reverse your support for these harmful policies and let the Congress know of your opposition to Medicare Advantage cuts and to doctor-owned hospital mandates harming the Wenatchee Valley Medical Center.

Sincerely,



Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress