

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Verma:

[Better Medicare Alliance](#) is an [alliance of more than 100+ organizations](#), including providers, professional associations, aging services organizations, health plans, and more than 300,000 aligned Medicare Advantage beneficiaries. Together we support and advocate for policies that ensure Medicare Advantage remains a strong and stable option within Medicare.

**We appreciate the efforts made by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) over the past year to improve the Medicare and You Handbook. We support efforts to continue to enhance the information and decision-making tools available to beneficiaries. We encourage the Administration to take further steps to better enable seniors to make informed decisions and become active choosers in their health coverage.**

By modernizing the information and access to meaningful educational tools on Medicare options you will better empower Medicare beneficiaries to make educated choices about their health care, and thereby enable them to be smart shoppers regarding the health coverage options available to them. We strongly believe that the federal government can and should be closing these gaps of knowledge and understanding about the Medicare program.

We recommend the following actions to improve materials and decision-making tools for beneficiaries:

- CMS and the Social Security Administration (SSA) should update beneficiary educational materials to improve readability, offer visual illustrations of concepts to accommodate various health literacy levels, target outreach to provide more personalized support throughout the enrollment process, and incorporate innovative approaches to education and consumer assistance.
- Improve how CMS and SSA work together to educate and conduct outreach to Medicare-eligible beneficiaries, particularly during initial Medicare enrollment, including linking information and use of similar language and decision-making tools.
- Modernize Medicare Plan Finder, so seniors can easily compare Medicare Advantage to FFS options based on health needs, quality, cost and provider networks.

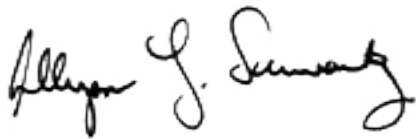
**BETTER MEDICARE**  
ALLIANCE

- Ensure State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) have the resources and training they need to educate beneficiaries about both Medicare Fee For Service and Medicare Advantage.

As the Medicare population continues to expand and age, with over 10,000 baby-boomers aging into the program each day, and the population of those aged 80 and older nearly tripling between now and 2050, now is the time to modernize the Medicare enrollment process and tools consumers are using so they can make well-informed decisions about their Medicare coverage

We thank you for your interest in enhancing beneficiary education and outreach on Medicare options. We stand ready to work with you as a partner and a resource in continuing to improve consumer understanding of Medicare Advantage.

Sincerely,



Allyson Y. Schwartz  
President & CEO  
Better Medicare Alliance

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Aetna  
Alliance for Aging Research  
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists  
American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
American Medical Group Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
American Telemedicine Association  
Area Agency on Aging Palm Beach / Treasure Coast, Inc.  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Association for Community Affiliated Plans  
Atrius Health  
Banner Health  
Business Council of New York State  
Central Ohio Primary Care Physicians  
Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey  
ChenMed

**BETTER MEDICARE**  
ALLIANCE

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey  
Commonwealth Care Alliance  
Connecticut Association of Health Underwriters  
Consortium for Older Adult Wellness  
Consumer Action  
Council for Affordable Health Coverage  
Delaware State Chamber of Commerce  
Delta Dental of CA, PA, NY, & Affiliates  
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce  
Direct Primary Care Coalition  
Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley  
Federation of American Hospitals  
Florida Health Networks  
Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health  
Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce  
Gundersen Health System  
Health Care Transformation Task Force  
Health Quality Partners  
Healthcare Leadership Council  
Humana  
Indiana University Health  
Inland Empire Association of Health Underwriters  
Intermed  
International Council on Active Aging  
Iora Health  
LeadingAge  
Lehigh Valley Health Network  
LIBERTY Dental Plan Foundation  
Martin's Point Health Care  
Meals on Wheels America  
Mercy Health  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
National Association of Dental Plans  
National Association of Health Underwriters  
National Association of Hispanic Nurses  
National Association of Hispanic Nurses Garden State Chapter  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Business Group on Health  
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging

**BETTER MEDICARE**  
ALLIANCE

National Coalition on Health Care  
National Hispanic Council on Aging  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization  
National Medical Association  
National Minority Quality Forum  
National Patient Advocate Foundation  
National Retail Federation  
naviHealth  
Network for Excellence in Health Innovation  
New Jersey Association of Nurse Anesthetists  
New Jersey Business and Industry Association  
New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce  
New Jersey State Nurses Association  
Northwell Health  
Novant Health  
Nurse Practitioner Association of New York State  
Orange County Association of Health Underwriters  
Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease  
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry  
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging  
Pittsburgh Business Group on Health  
Population Health Alliance  
Prevea Health  
Public Sector Healthcare Roundtable  
SCAN Health Plan  
Senior Resource Alliance  
Silver Sneakers – a Tivity Health Company  
SNP Alliance  
Society for Women’s Health Research  
Summa Health  
Teachers’ Retirement System of Kentucky  
Temple Health  
Texas Association of Business  
The Gerontological Society of America  
The Latino Coalition  
Tivity Health  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
UnitedHealth Group  
University of Michigan Center for Value-Based Insurance Design  
Virtua  
Visiting Nurse Service of New York  
VSP Vision Care  
WomenHeart

YMCA of the USA

cc: Demetrios Kouzoukas,  
Principal Deputy Administrator & Director of the Center for Medicare