

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 6, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Secretary Burwell,

Congress overwhelmingly passed the bipartisan Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) with the goal of moving towards a high quality, value-based health care system. We write to express the importance of successful implementation, as intended by Congress, of the reforms included in MACRA and the establishment of the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and Alternative Payment Model (APM) tracks for physician payment.

While MACRA requires significant changes in physician payment to move to value over volume, we believe that many of the nation's physicians are ready for these changes as they incorporate the physician payment and quality predecessor programs, which have been in existence for many years. The MIPS payment track includes programs with which physicians and practitioners have years of experience including: (1) the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) enacted in 2006; (2) the Value Based Modifier (VBM) enacted in 2010; and (3) the Electronic Health Record Incentive Programs with Meaningful Use (MU) enacted in 2009.

The Congressional intent for MACRA was twofold: to consolidate, streamline and ease the burden of the various quality reporting programs for physicians and practitioners and to incentivize quality, value-based care through aligned payments bonuses and penalties for physicians and practitioners.

With these principles, we urge the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to ensure that all physicians and practitioners have an equal opportunity to succeed under the Quality Payment Program. Specifically, we urge CMS to consider flexibilities for all practitioners, including small practices, to succeed with:

- Simplified, streamlined, coordinated requirements;
- Clear pathways to succeed in MIPS or the APM tracks; and
- Opportunities to move to APM track and flexibilities to be rewarded for meaningful delivery system reform activities in MIPS and in the APMs; and
- Reporting in January 2017 with appropriate systems ready and in place.

We understand that the timeframe is short, but we are committed to the successful and timely implementation of the law while still providing practitioners time and opportunities to succeed. We look forward to continue working with CMS to ensure a smooth transition throughout MACRA implementation.

Sincerely,



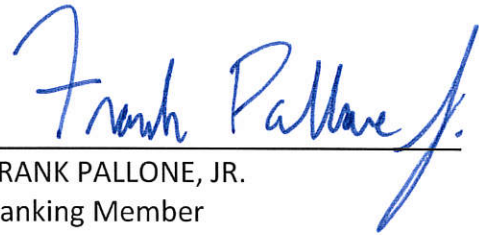
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Committee on Ways and Means



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Committee on Energy and Commerce



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Committee on Energy and Commerce
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