



Advocates for Responsible Care

1434 Brook Valley Lane
Atlanta, Georgia 30324

August 12, 2011

The Honorable Hank Johnson
United States House of Representatives
1427 Longworth House office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Fax: 202-226-0691

Re: Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB)

Dear Congressman Johnson,

As the President of Advocates for Responsible Care, I feel strongly that the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) is an ill-advised way to cut costs for the Medicare program. It is causing worry and will potentially make trouble for millions of senior citizens. I am asking for your help for all Georgia seniors.

IPAB was created as part of health reform legislation and will take Medicare policy decisions out of Congress and into a body of fifteen presidential appointees with unprecedented power to decide how and what to cut in the Medicare budgets. The spending cuts targets are set based on spending in the *entire* Medicare program. However, the IPAB is prohibited from making any cuts to Medicare Part A providers until 2019. Part A providers account for approximately 37% of Medicare's spending. This leaves IPAB with little choice but to propose making cuts in Medicare payments to providers and suppliers under Medicare Parts B, C, and D. This is not an equitable solution. According to an American Medical Association survey of 9,000 doctors nationwide, current reimbursement rates have already led 17 percent of all doctors, including 31 percent of primary care physicians, to restrict the number of Medicare patients in their practices. IPAB will result in even lower payment rates that would likely exacerbate this problem.

Cutting costs within Medicare will lead to several negative results. Budget cuts will most likely decrease the coverage allotted to each individual. Medicare beneficiaries will have limited access to specialty doctors. The only providers not exempt to Medicare cuts in 2014 are rural area hospitals, doctors in specialty fields, pharmaceutical companies, and durable medical equipment companies. This will decrease access to the quality healthcare for Medicare recipients. It's difficult enough for Medicare beneficiaries to find doctors that will take them as patients because of previous deep Medicare cuts. This means more of Georgia seniors' well being will be affected.

I am urging you to support the legislation to repeal the IPAB. It will be harmful and dangerous to millions of senior citizens. I hope you understand the consequences of IPAB and that you will do everything in your power to eliminate it from the healthcare reform.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Leone-Glasser, RN, HHC, President
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