

RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD
WISCONSIN

506 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5323
(202) 224-1280 (TDD)
feingold.senate.gov

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

November 17, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

I appreciate the tremendous amount of work and energy you have dedicated to bringing health reform legislation to the Senate floor. As you know, one of my priorities for health reform is to stop the cuts to hospice providers that would result from issuing a new productivity adjustment to their reimbursement formula. Senator Wyden has an excellent amendment, drafted together with the hospice community, which is pending analysis by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

This amendment would strike the language that calls for a "productivity adjustment" to hospice providers' reimbursement and replace it with language that limits hospice growth to the Medical Care Component of the Consumer Price Index (Medical CPI). This is expected to decrease projected expenditures for hospice by \$9.6 billion.

I strongly urge you to send the Wyden amendment to the Congressional Budget Office for analysis. Once scored, the amendment could be reviewed by our colleagues as a reasonable, bipartisan alternative to the productivity adjustments for hospice.

In my home state of Wisconsin, not-for-profit hospice groups and providers will be devastated by the proposed productivity adjustments to reimbursement. And as a result, access to end-of-life care in my state will be significantly reduced from what it is today, particularly in rural areas. I'm sure you agree with me that simply cannot happen.

Averting the cuts to hospice reimbursement due to the productivity adjustments is a top priority of mine for health reform, and I join Senator Wyden in his efforts to advance an alternative to the provisions passed by the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,



Russell D. Feingold
United States Senate

CC: Chairman Max Baucus, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Ron Wyden

○ 1600 ASPEN COMMONS
ROOM 100
MIDDLETON, WI 53562
(608) 828-1200
(608) 828-1215 (TDD)

○ 517 EAST WISCONSIN AVENUE
ROOM 408
MILWAUKEE, WI 53202
(414) 276-7282

○ 401 5TH STREET
ROOM 410
WAUSAU, WI 54403
(715) 848-5660

○ 425 STATE STREET
ROOM 225
LA CROSSE, WI 54601
(608) 782-5585

○ 1640 MAIN STREET
GREEN BAY, WI 54302
(920) 465-7508