



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3605

May 13, 2020

Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20101

Dear Administrator Verma:

We write to urge the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to delay the hospice component of the 2021 Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) Model by at least one year. We share a commitment to ensure all Americans including current and future Medicare beneficiaries have access to affordable, high quality health care.

However, in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are very concerned the model could have the opposite effect by hindering access and diminishing quality of care due to the strain on resources all providers are facing, as well as the limited time available to operationalize the model by January 1, 2021.

The COVID-19 emergency has put unprecedented pressure on the health care system and all stakeholders involved strongly believe it would be best to delay this model. While we support innovation enhances access to care for the seriously ill and their families, we are concerned there is not sufficient time to operationalize the model, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many stakeholder organizations impacted by this model have echoed similar concerns regarding the timing of this demonstration, including the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), the Medicare Rights Center (MRC), the Better Medicare Alliance (BMA), and LeadingAge and associated partners from the Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) and ElevatingHOME (EH). It is clear hospice providers, Medicare Advantage plans and other organizations need to be focused on addressing the immediate needs of their communities during this time of crisis. We know you share the goal of putting patients and their respective communities first and appreciate your consideration of this request.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue. Should you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Legislative Assistant Joel Keralis (joel.keralis@mail.house.gov) in the office of Congressman Adrian Smith.

Sincerely,



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

Terri Sewell
Member of Congress