

The 60 Plus Association

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Kill the Death Tax. Protect Social Security and Medicare. Energy Security.

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Honorary Chairman

Pat Boone
National Spokesman

March 10, 2014

Dear Chairman Pitts,

As Chairman of the 60 Plus Association, representing over 7 MILLION senior citizen activists nationwide, I commend you on convening the hearing entitled “Keeping the Promise: Allowing Seniors to Keep Their Medicare Advantage Plans If They Like Them.”

I often weigh in on proposed legislation and changes in regulations on behalf of America’s seniors. This time, it is personal, as well. In spite of the overwhelming popularity of Medicare Advantage, some plans have already been cancelled. I speak from experience.

In January, 2010, I switched from a traditional supplemental Medicare plan to Cigna Advantage. Why? Because, like so many other senior citizens on Medicare, I found that these MA plans limited yearly out-of-pocket expenses compared to the enormous financial burden an extended hospital stay could incur under original Medicare. In addition to paying the Medicare Part B premiums, additional enrollment and cost-sharing co-pays may (but didn’t always) apply, based upon the plan selected, and many plans offered expanded benefits, including skilled nursing, vision, hearing, dental care and health and wellness programs.

Despite repeated assurances by President Barack Obama that “If you like the insurance you now have, you can keep it...period”, I (as did seniors in Massachusetts, California, and other states) received a letter at the end of 2010 that my Medicare Advantage coverage was being terminated. I had to again seek insurance under traditional Medicare.

I liked my Medicare Advantage plan and felt it well met my health care requirements. I couldn’t keep it...period.

Of the 41 MILLION senior citizens 65 and older currently participating in Medicare, 14 MILLION of these seniors opted to enroll in the Medicare Advantage program, this private alternative to traditional Medicare, often through a Health Maintenance Organization (65% in 2011) or a Preferred Provider Organization (local PPOs were 18% and Regional PPOs were 9% in 2011). 41% of these Medicare Advantage enrollees have incomes of \$20,000 or less, and 1 in 5 are minorities.

Of the \$556 BILLION total Medicare benefit payments made in 2012, only 22% was for Medicare Advantage care (statistics according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.)

While the Medicare Advantage patch that went into effect on April 19, 2011 BY PRESIDENT OBAMA’S ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION PRIOR TO THE 2012 ELECTIONS temporarily

(over)

delayed some cuts in benefits, over \$300 BILLION of the more than \$715 BILLION cuts to Medicare under Obamacare will come from the Medicare Advantage program and will be funneled into new government programs not for seniors. At that time, Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah (Ranking Republican of the Senate Finance Committee) and Representative Dave Camp of Michigan (Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee) called this patch “a thinly veiled use of taxpayer dollars for political purposes.”

What will be the future impact on Medicare Advantage programs? Those Medicare Advantage programs that survive Obamacare are expected to see cuts in coverage and reduced options for care.

We agree with you, Chairman Pitts, that “The Medicare Advantage program is a lifeline for seniors and those with disabilities and has proven to be a popular and successful model for delivering quality and affordable health care....Broken health care promises have become far too commonplace under this administration. The president needs to keep the promise to America’s seniors and disabled.”

Indeed, this is another example that “Medicare as we know it” no longer exists, and America’s seniors, unfortunately, are being “thrown off the cliff.”

Sincerely,



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The 60 Plus Association is a 20-year-old nonpartisan organization working for death tax repeal, saving Social Security and Medicare, affordable prescription drugs, lowering energy costs and other issues featuring a limited government, less taxes approach as well as a strict adherence to the Constitution. 60 Plus calls on support from over 7 million citizen activists. 60 Plus publishes a newsletter, SENIOR VOICE, and a Scorecard, bestowing awards on lawmakers of both parties who vote “pro-senior.” 60 Plus has been called “an increasingly influential senior citizen’s group” and the acknowledged conservative alternative to the liberal AARP.