



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CATARACT AND REFRACTIVE SURGERY

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June 30, 2014

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Brown, Senator Blumenthal, and Representative DeLauro,

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On behalf of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS), a medical specialty society representing nearly 10,000 ophthalmologists in the United States and abroad who share a particular interest in cataract and refractive surgical care, I am pleased to issue our strong support for H.R. 4998/S. 2552, the Medicare Advantage Participant Bill of Rights. Thank you for your leadership on this issue to provide physicians and patients with better predictability and fairness regarding Medicare Advantage (MA) plan coverage.

Ophthalmology practices across the country have been especially hard-hit by unexpected plan terminations seemingly without cause, leaving many patients without continued access to the physicians who regularly treat them and, in some areas, very few alternatives. Over the past several months, ASCRS has worked with our colleagues in the medical community to address this issue and we are pleased that you share our concerns about these actions.

As you are aware, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced that for 2015, Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAOs) must notify CMS within 90 days if significant network terminations are planned, during which time the plan must demonstrate continued compliance with applicable network access requirements and suggested that best practice for MAOs would be to provide enrollees with a 30 day notice of plan terminations. However, your legislation would give both physicians and patients better predictability by not allowing plans to drop providers mid-year and requiring provider networks be finalized 60 days prior to the enrollment period.

Thank you again for your sponsorship of this much-needed legislation that will ensure patients have continued and predictable access to their physicians of choice. We look forward to working with you as the bill moves through the legislative process.

If you need any additional assistance, please don't hesitate to contact Nancey McCann, Director of Government Relations, at nmccann@ascrs.org or 703-591-2220.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Lewis (handwritten signature)

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President, ASCRS

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