

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 5, 2020

Seema Verma, MPH
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 445-G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma:

We write to express strong bipartisan support for the Medicare Advantage program, which 40 percent of eligible Medicare beneficiaries, more than 22 million people, choose to enroll in.¹ We appreciate your ongoing commitment to preserving and strengthening the Medicare Advantage program for current and future Medicare beneficiaries. As the Administration considers updates to the program for plan year 2021, we urge you to ensure that the Medicare Advantage program will continue to offer affordable, high-quality, patient-centered coverage options for the diverse populations the program serves, including beneficiaries with End Stage Renal Disease who for the first time will be able to choose a Medicare Advantage plan.

Millions of seniors depend on Medicare Advantage plans to provide comprehensive, affordable health care as they age. In 2020, average premiums are expected to decline by 14 percent to their lowest point in the last 13 years while enrollment is projected to increase to more than 24 million.² Further, the average number of plan choices has continued to increase; in 2020, 93 percent of individuals on Medicare have access to a Medicare Advantage plan that includes prescription drug coverage for no additional premium.³

Medicare Advantage offers affordable, high-quality care coordination, disease management programs, out-of-pocket spending limits, access to community-based programs, additional supplemental benefits such as vision and dental coverage, and often prescription drug coverage for no additional premium. The program also serves vulnerable and underserved populations that have special needs and chronic conditions and provides supports for seniors at critical times of their life. Moreover, as a result of greater flexibility in plan benefit offerings, next year nearly 14 million enrollees will have access to additional telehealth benefits, and an estimated 2.6 million beneficiaries will have access to more supplemental benefits, including adult day care services and in-home support services to help them manage their health. In addition, up to 1.2 million enrollees

¹ <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/ReportsTrustFunds/Downloads/TR2019.pdf>

² <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/trump-administration-drives-down-medicare-advantage-and-part-d-premiums-seniors>

³ <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/medicare-advantage-2020-spotlight-first-look/>

will have access to new benefits that address social barriers to accessing care such as food assistance, transportation, and home modifications.

For plan year 2021, we urge the Administration to continue its efforts to promote flexibility and innovation, incentivize quality improvements, and support value-based arrangements with health care providers. It will be important to ensure that any substantive changes to the Medicare Advantage program provide plan sponsors with sufficient time for thorough evaluation, and implementation. We also encourage the Administration to build on the enhanced supplemental benefits that were offered this plan year by providing additional flexibility, such as expanding telehealth services for underserved and rural communities, to help drive the next generation of innovative approaches in Medicare to improve health outcomes, while also maintaining robust beneficiary protections.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to further strengthen the Medicare Advantage program and ensure millions of seniors have access to comprehensive, affordable health coverage choices.

Sincerely,


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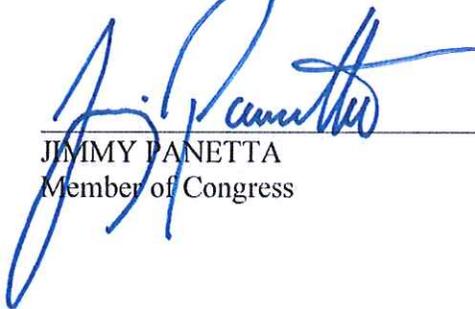
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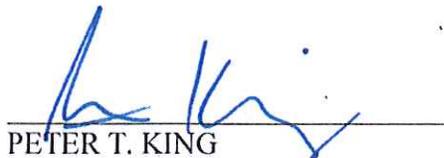
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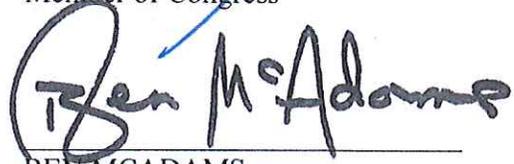

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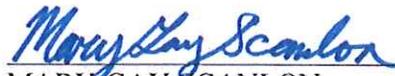
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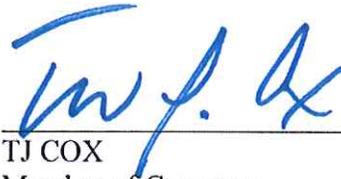
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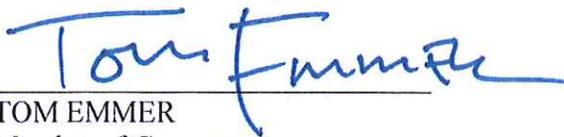
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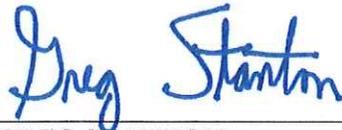
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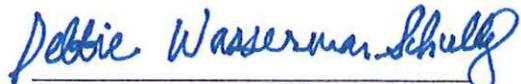
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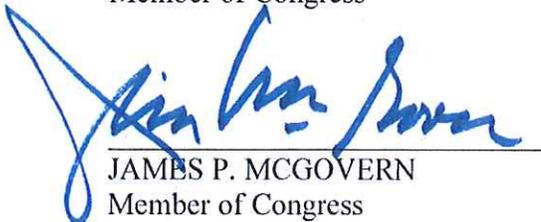
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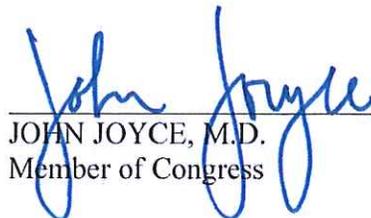
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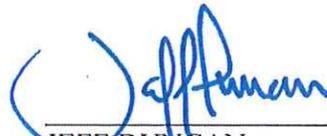
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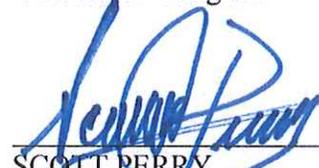
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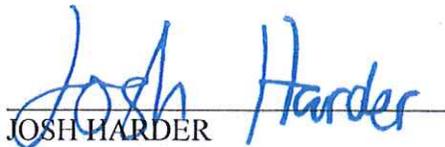
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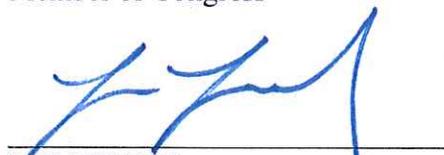

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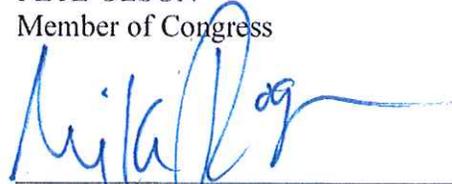
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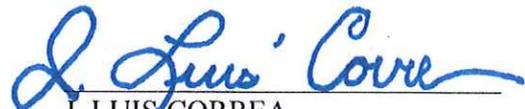
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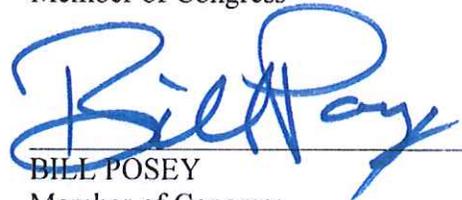
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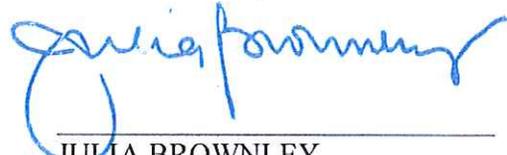
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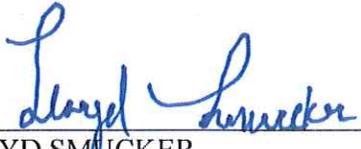
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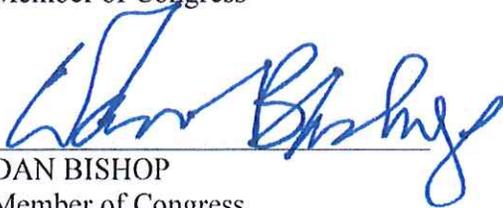
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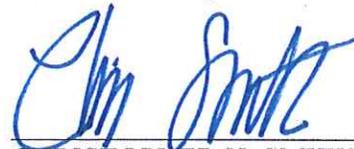
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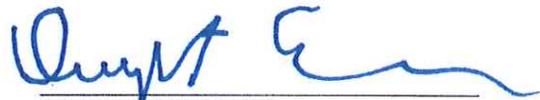
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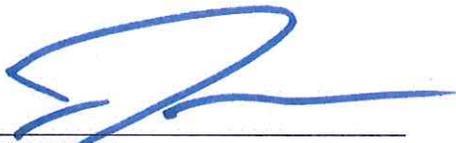
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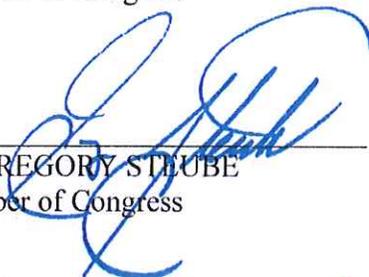
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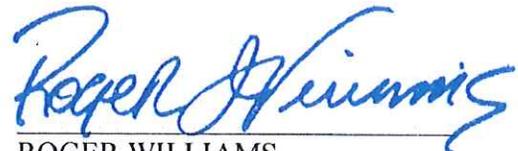
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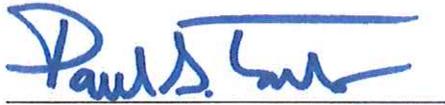
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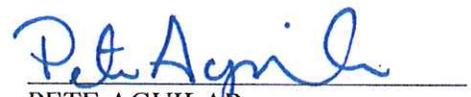

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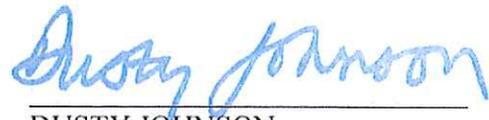
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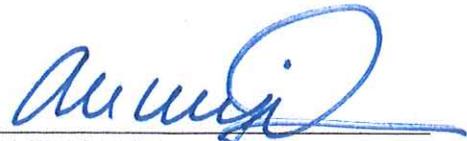
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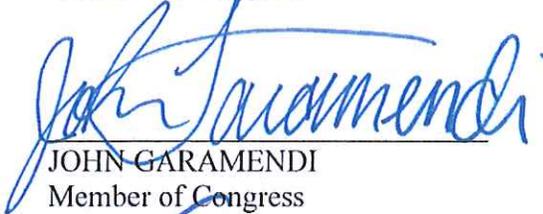
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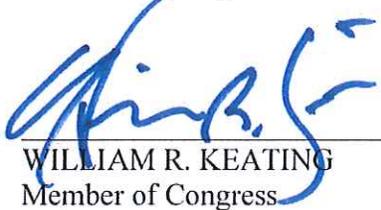
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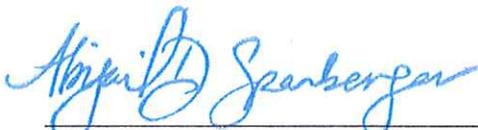
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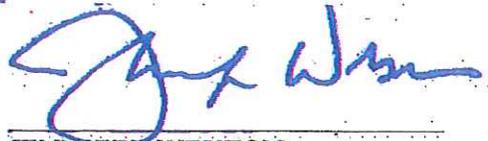
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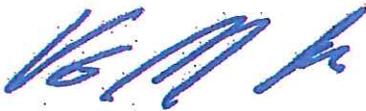
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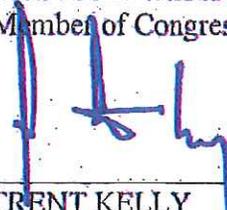
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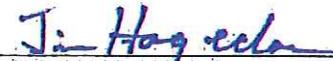
DENVER RIGGLEMAN
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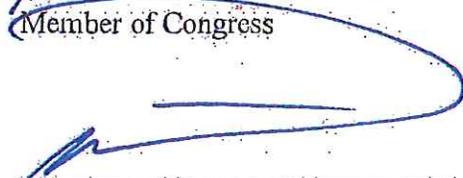
ROBIN L. KELLY
Member of Congress



FILEMON VELA
Member of Congress



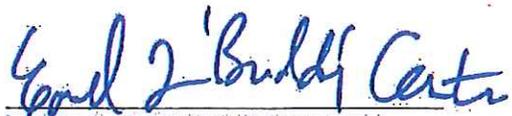
JIM HAGEDORN
Member of Congress



SCOTT DESJARLAIS
Member of Congress



RAUL RUIZ, M.D.
Member of Congress



EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER
Member of Congress



GREGORY F. MURPHY, M.D.
Member of Congress



BILL FLORES
Member of Congress



FREDERICA S. WILSON
Member of Congress



GRACE MENG
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



JOHN ROSE
Member of Congress



VERONICA ESCOBAR
Member of Congress



HAKEEM JEFFRIES
Member of Congress



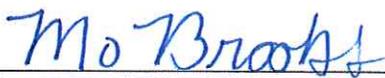
KEVIN HERN
Member of Congress



XOCHITL TORRES SMALL
Member of Congress



AL LAWSON
Member of Congress



MO BROOKS
Member of Congress



MIKE LEVIN
Member of Congress



JOYCE BEATTY
Member of Congress



MARK E. GREEN, M.D.
Member of Congress



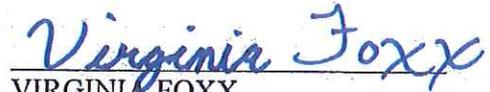
ELAINE G. LURIA
Member of Congress



JOHN R. CURTIS
Member of Congress



JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress



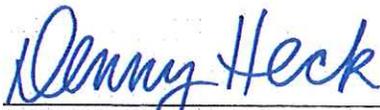
VIRGINIA FOXX
Member of Congress



STEVE WATKINS
Member of Congress



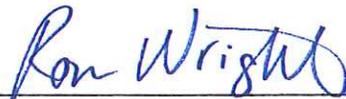
KATHERINE CLARK
Member of Congress



DENNY HECK
Member of Congress



CHRIS STEWART
Member of Congress



RON WRIGHT
Member of Congress