

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 25, 2010

Donald Berwick, M.D.
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Attn: CMS-1503-P
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Re: CMS-1503-P; Medicare Program; Payment Policies under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Revisions to Part B for CY 2011

Dear Dr. Berwick:


We write to draw your attention to concerns raised by the mental health community regarding the 2011 Medicare physician fee schedule proposed rule. We urge you to strongly consider the potential harm to the mental health benefit in Medicare incurred by the new payment methodologies.

CMS is proposing to “rebase” and revise the Medicare Economic Index (MEI) by linking it to more updated practice data and making changes to the expense categories. These changes will lead to an increase in practice expense values for many services. The CMS decision to maintain budget neutrality by reducing payments for the *work value* component will place the greatest burden on mental health professionals. As shown by CMS Table 73, psychologists and social workers will suffer the greatest loss of income among all Part B providers, with their payments reduced by 5% on average. Psychiatrists are close behind, facing a 3% cut due to the MEI changes.

It is likely that, should this rebasing be implemented in 2011, seniors and the disabled will have increased difficulty accessing to the Medicare mental health benefit. We ask CMS to consider alternative approaches to achieving budget neutrality that will more fairly apportion the burden among all specialties.

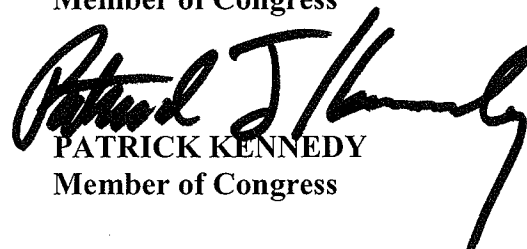
We appreciate your consideration of this important matter.

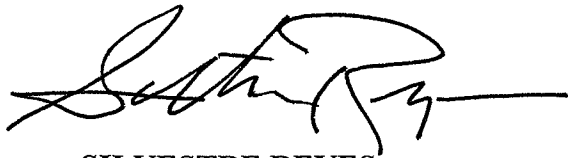
Sincerely,


TAMMY BALDWIN
Member of Congress


LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress


PAUL TONKO
Member of Congress

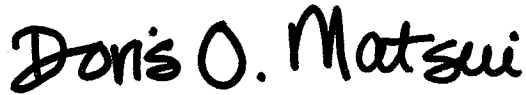

PATRICK KENNEDY
Member of Congress



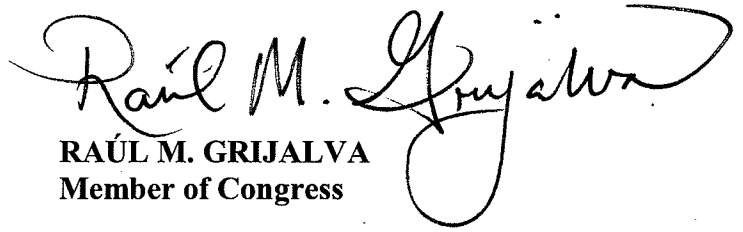
SILVESTRE REYES
Member of Congress



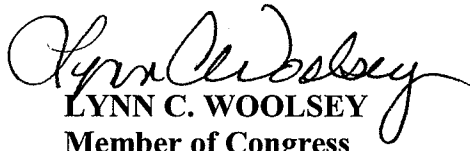
CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress



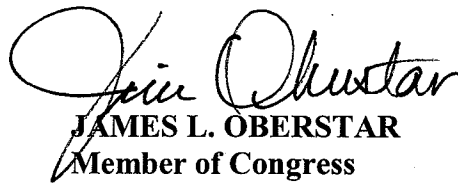
DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress



RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress



LYNN C. WOOLSEY
Member of Congress



JAMES L. OBERSTAR
Member of Congress



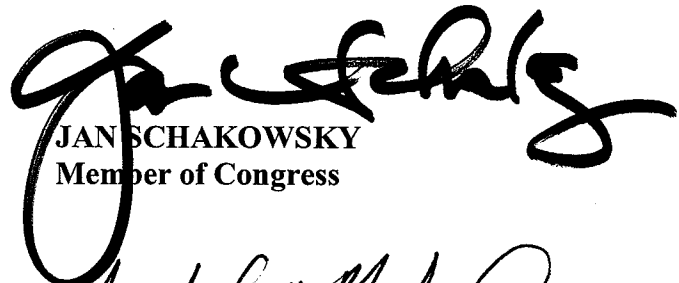
TIM MURPHY
Member of Congress



LLOYD DOGGETT
Member of Congress



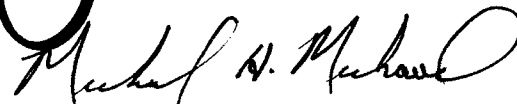
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS
Member of Congress



JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN
Member of Congress



MICHAEL H. MICHAUD
Member of Congress



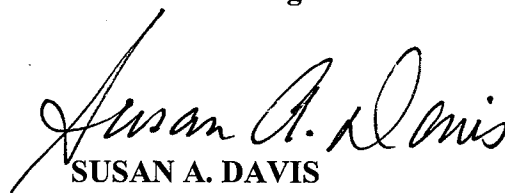
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
Member of Congress



BARNEY FRANK
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MORAN
Member of Congress



SUSAN A. DAVIS
Member of Congress

Dennis Kucinich

DENNIS KUCINICH
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David Price

DAVID PRICE
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