

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 10, 2015

Mr. Andy Slavitt  
Acting Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Administrator Slavitt,

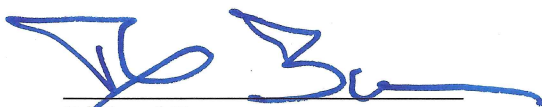
We are writing to express our serious concerns regarding the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recent proposal to cut Medicare payments to radiation oncology providers in the physician fee schedule for calendar year 2016. We recognize the valuable role community-based radiation therapy plays in meeting patients' oncology needs and we are concerned that the proposed cuts could further jeopardize patient access to this treatment option.

As you know, radiation oncology is an important cancer treatment option in the battle against cancer, offering patients less invasive care on an outpatient basis that allows many patients to continue living their lives while receiving this treatment. Yet, if CMS' proposed rule is finalized, radiation oncology services would face another three percent overall cut, while freestanding cancer centers would be subject to approximately a six percent payment cut. These cuts could particularly adversely impact patients with breast and prostate cancer because the proposed rule could cut payments for care for these patients by 25 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

The latest proposed cuts follow a disturbing trend of proposed cuts in recent years that has resulted in cumulative payment reductions totaling approximately 20 percent for freestanding cancer centers. We remain not only concerned about the latest proposed cuts to radiation oncology proposed in the 2016 physician fee schedule rule, but also about the repeated proposals in recent years to further cut reimbursement for this care. It is critical that patients' have access to quality and timely cancer care in their communities. Therefore, we look forward to working with you to ensure that community-based radiation oncologists have the payment stability necessary to ensure our constituents have access to the radiation oncology care they need, including continued dialogue regarding potential legislative options that achieve these goals.

We strongly urge CMS to reconsider the proposed cuts to radiation therapy in the 2016 physician fee schedule final rule and look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of our nation's cancer patients. Thank you in advance for your consideration on these important matters.

Sincerely,



Richard Burr  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator