

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Patrick Conway, MD, MSc
Director
Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

September 29, 2016

Dear Dr. Conway,

We want to commend the pioneering work the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) has done to improve preventative care, payment systems and care coordination in the U.S. The CMMI office plays a significant role in modernizing our country's health care system. We encourage you to begin a demonstration project using naturopathic physicians to improve the value and cost-effectiveness of preventative care for cardiovascular disease and related illnesses.

The success of the CMMI Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) demonstration project shows that coordinated delivery of preventative care can improve patient outcomes and reduce Medicare beneficiaries' cost of care. We believe these results can be replicated for seniors suffering from cardiovascular related illnesses using integrated naturopathic medicine. As you may know, cardiovascular disease affects more than 83 million Americans, half of whom are seniors. Upwards of 70 percent of seniors, both men and women, suffer from one or more types of cardiovascular related illness. Almost 40 percent of the country's total spending on cardiovascular disease is for Medicare eligible seniors.

Licensed naturopathic doctors have attended four-year, federally accredited post-graduate naturopathic medical school and have passed national licensing exams. They are trained first and foremost as primary care providers, with an emphasis on illness prevention, proactive self-care including nutrition and stress reduction, and chronic disease treatment aimed at helping the body heal itself.

We know that preventative care, especially when it is integrated into truly patient-centric health care, can greatly reduce the risk of chronic illnesses, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease. In fact, many forms of cardiovascular disease are preventable with changes in nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction. Naturopathic physicians are ideally positioned to effectively carry out a CMMI demonstration project aimed at increasing coordinated preventative care to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease in the Medicare population.

There are multiple scientific, peer-reviewed studies that reveal naturopathic care reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease among high-risk patients.¹ In one study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, there was a significant reduction (16.9%) in the risk of

¹ Herman PM, Szczurko O, Cooley K, Seely D. "A naturopathic approach to the prevention of cardiovascular disease: cost-effectiveness of a pragmatic multi-worksite randomized clinical trial." *J Occup Environ Med.* 2014. 56(2):171-76.; Link BK, Lafferty WE, Tyree PT, Diehr PK. "Comparison of health care expenditures among insured users and nonusers of complementary and alternative medicine in Washington State: a cost minimization analysis." *J Altern Complement Med.* 2010, 16(4):411-17.

cardiovascular disease following counselling about nutritional and physical activity provided by licensed naturopathic physicians.² The results of these studies are promising, and we believe the Innovation Center is an appropriate platform to test the potential benefits of including naturopathic physicians in cardiovascular care.

We urge the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to begin a demonstration project to explore the improvement in health outcomes and cost savings for Medicare beneficiaries at risk for cardiovascular disease who receive treatment and coordinated care by naturopathic physicians. This demonstration project will highlight a new model for healthcare delivery within Medicare that improves seniors' quality of life, diminishes the number of high cost medical interventions required, and saves taxpayer dollars. Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



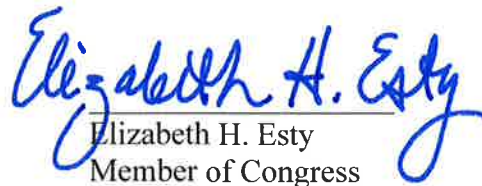
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress

² Seely D, Szczurko O, Cooley K et al. "Naturopathic medicine for the prevention of cardiovascular disease: a randomized clinical trial." *Can Med Assoc. J* 2013; 185(9):E400-416.



William R. Keating
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Earl Blumenauer
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Julia Brownley
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