



June 25, 2019

Richard Neal, Chair (D-MA)
Ways and Means Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Kevin Brady, Ranking Member (R-TX)
Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Neil and Ranking Member Brady:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 134,600 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to inform you of our strong support for legislation that removes Medicare beneficiary cost-sharing responsibilities for the Chronic Care Management (CCM) services under the Medicare program. **We strongly support the proposal before the Ways & Means Committee that eliminates beneficiary cost sharing for the CCM service code effective 2021.**

For several years, the AAFP has urged Congress and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to eliminate the applicability of deductible and co-insurance requirements for the CCM codes. Eliminating CCM cost-sharing requirements would facilitate greater utilization of these important codes, which in return would increase coordination of care for those beneficiaries with the greatest health care needs.

Patients are interested in CCM until informed of the cost sharing responsibility. If waived this will allow Medicare beneficiaries the opportunity to be more engaged in their care. According to AAFP data, less than half of family physicians provided CCM services to Medicare patients. Rural physicians are more likely to provide and bill for CCM services to Medicare patients. In 2018, the percentage of physicians who provided and billed for CCM services increased significantly. The December 2015 Chronic Care Working Group (CCWG) Options Document set forth as one of its policy options that it was “considering waiving the beneficiary co-payment associated with the current chronic care management code as well as the proposed high severity chronic care code.” Though the AAFP encouraged the CCWG to pursue this, unfortunately the *CHRONIC Care Act* of 2017 did not include this policy.

The AAFP, through our comment letters to CMS, has consistently expressed our desire to remove the cost-sharing requirements. While we recognize that CMS made great strides to simplify the requirements of CCM services regarding consent and access to the care plan, we still see evidence that the cost-sharing requirement is an impediment to the broad utilization of this code. Therefore, we continue to support the elimination of the cost-sharing requirements associated with these services and strongly support the proposal under consideration by your Committee.

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Thank you for considering this important legislation that would improve the quality of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries. The AAFP strongly supports this proposal and applauds your leadership in addressing this issue. We urge the Committee to pass this bill. Please contact R. Shawn Martin, Senior Vice President of Advocacy, Practice Advancement, and Policy at smartin@aafp.org or 202-655-4929 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Munger MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop at the end of the "M" and a small flourish at the end of the "D".

Michael L. Munger, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

CC: Rep. Suzan DelBene's (D-WA)

About Family Medicine

Family physicians conduct approximately one in five of the total medical office visits in the United States per year—more than any other specialty. Family physicians provide comprehensive, evidence-based, and cost-effective care dedicated to improving the health of patients, families, and communities. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing and personal patient-physician relationship where the family physician serves as the hub of each patient's integrated care team. More Americans depend on family physicians than on any other medical specialty.