

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As your Administration advocates for health care reform legislation moving forward in Congress, we want to make you aware that Minnesota is a state in which the quality of care exceeds the national average and per-beneficiary fee-for-service Medicare costs are substantially lower than the national average. Our "low-cost, high-quality" state is setting the national standard for Medicare, yet we are penalized by the current geographic payment inequities in the Medicare reimbursement formula. This inequity is no longer tolerable and we urge you to work with us to fix this problem in any health care reform legislation voted on in Congress.

All Americans pay equally into Medicare, yet beneficiaries in Minnesota are severely disadvantaged in the essential benefits they receive when compared to citizens in other states, such as Florida, New York, or California. Why are Minnesotans paying higher premiums for prescription drugs, dental, vision and hearing services while residents of other states receive those benefits free of any additional cost? This flawed Medicare formula continues to penalize Minnesota taxpayers, patients, providers, hospitals, counties, and the entire health care sector that provides high- quality, low-cost care.

Furthermore, any public insurance option that is based on Medicare's current reimbursement formula would only further penalize Minnesota and undermine the very success our state has attained in delivering efficient, quality care. Please know that we view any health care reform legislation that perpetuates or extends the current inequity in Medicare as harming Minnesota's health care system which is obviously unacceptable to us and our constituents.

Mr. President, we must ensure that any health care reform legislation includes benefits for our constituents and the state of Minnesota. We look forward to working with you in the upcoming weeks to find a solution to this important issue.

Sincerely,



AMY KLOBUCHAR
U.S. Senator



AL FRANKEN
U.S. Senator



BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress



TIM WALZ
Member of Congress



JAMES OBERSTAR
Member of Congress



ERIK PAULSEN
Member of Congress



COLLIN PETERSON
Member of Congress



MICHELE BACHMANN
Member of Congress



KEITH ELLISON
Member of Congress



JOHN KLINE
Member of Congress