

DAVID SCOTT
13TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

WWW.HOUSE.GOV/DAVIDSCOTT
DAVID.SCOTT@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1013

March 20, 2020

Seema Verma, Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20101

Dear Administrator Verma:

Thank you for your continued leadership on the COVID-19 Task Force and for working tirelessly to keep Americans safe and healthy. I am grateful for your collaboration with hospice and palliative care providers as they continue to respond to this coronavirus outbreak across the country. President Trump recently declared a national emergency and granted Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar increased authority under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act on March 13, 2020.

Since then, I have heard from a number of constituents, organizations, and stakeholders that care for hospice and palliative care patients throughout the state of Georgia, and appreciate the opportunity to share their interest in ensuring the availability of uninterrupted community-based care to patients and families. Hospice and palliative care centers were excluded from the "COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Health Care Providers Fact Sheet" released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on March 13th. This is a concerning omission in the waiver program as hospice providers care for the country's most vulnerable patients with serious illness and life-limiting illness in the private home and in any other setting.

As you know, these patients are at the highest risk for death if contracting COVID-19. Immediate action is necessary to help keep this unique population safe. Therefore, I ask your collaboration during these challenging times to increase temporary flexibility that will allow hospice and palliative care providers to continue caring for patients while reducing risk of exposure to COVID-19 to patients, their caregivers, and to the public by: expanding access to telehealth visits, streamlining the health care provider workforce, and allowing hospice providers to determine adequate staffing needs and facility capacity during this outbreak.

As you continue to work towards an effective response to the ongoing pandemic for patients across the country, please continue to work with stakeholders and hospice and palliative care professionals on specific guidance so that they can continue to serve their patients in a timely manner.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

Sincerely,



David Scott
Member of Congress

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
225 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1013
PHONE: (202) 225-2939
FAX: (202) 225-4628

JONESBORO OFFICE:
173 NORTH MAIN STREET
JONESBORO, GA 30236
PHONE: (770) 210-5073
FAX: (770) 210-5673

SMYRNA OFFICE:
888 CONCORD ROAD, STE. 100
SMYRNA, GA 30080
PHONE: (770) 432-5405
FAX: (770) 432-5813