

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2013

Honorable Marilyn Tavenner
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Tavenner:

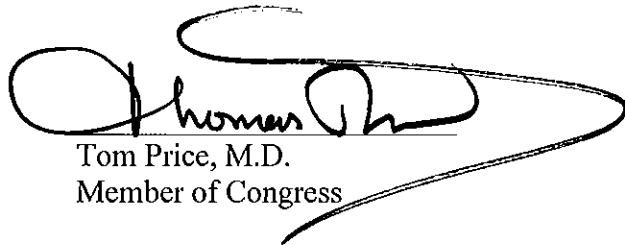
We are writing to express our concern about the potential for the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) to make significant cuts in Medicare reimbursement for total hip and knee replacement procedures in 2014 without adequate public notice and comment opportunity.

We have long believed that CMS policy should be shaped by careful consideration of public comments. We believe doctors who perform these procedures should have an opportunity to examine CMS's recommendations and underlying data and offer their analysis and comments before any rate changes go into effect. When considering rate changes, it is important to keep in mind that Medicare payments for hip and knee replacement procedures have not kept up with inflation. In real dollars, the payment rate has decreased 20% over the last 10 years.

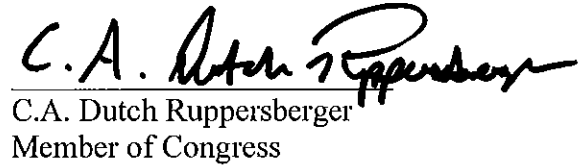
This issue has far-reaching implications for patient care. Total hip and total knee replacement surgery is highly effective, provides a net economic benefit to society by virtue of eliminating the indirect costs associated with the disability of severe hip and knee arthritis, and transforms the lives of patients so afflicted from dependency and immobility to independence and pain-free activity. If Medicare cuts physician payment for total hip and knee replacement surgery, beneficiary access will be severely limited. Medicare cuts would accelerate and exacerbate the trend of physicians opting out of Medicare or reducing the number of Medicare patients they are able to care for, as was recently reported in the Wall Street Journal. Limiting access of the most vulnerable segment of our society by cuts in Medicare reimbursement for these transformative and cost saving procedures is bad public policy.

CMS should not adopt significant Medicare payment reductions without providing meaningful notice and comment opportunity to doctors and the Medicare beneficiaries they serve. This is especially important for total hip and knee replacement procedures given the number of seniors who need this surgery currently and the increasing number who will need it in the future. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

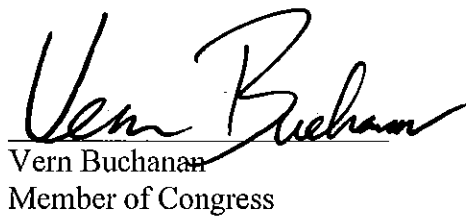
Sincerely,



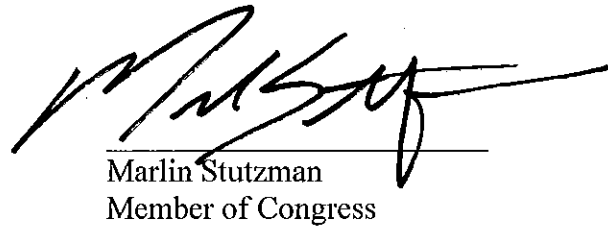
Tom Price, M.D.
Member of Congress



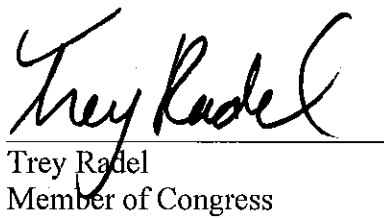
C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress



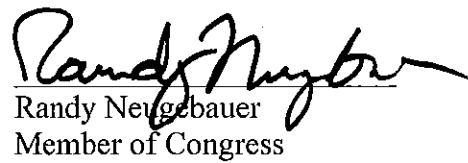
Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



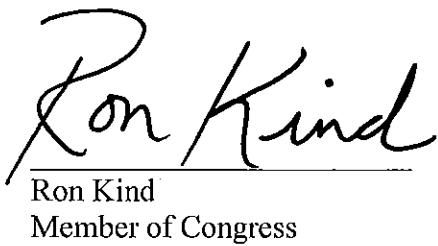
Marlin Stutzman
Member of Congress



Trey Radel
Member of Congress



Randy Neugebauer
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress