Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2013

Marilyn Tavenner
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Room 314G
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Tavenner:

We write today to urge you to ensure that seniors across our regions of Illinois and Iowa are able to access the resources that they need to make informed decisions during this year's Medicare open enrollment period.

The open enrollment period is an important time for seniors. The ability to switch Medicare Advantage plans or move between Medicare Advantage and traditional Medicare gives seniors flexibility and confidence that Medicare is working for them. We understand that the government shutdown has resulted in employee furloughs at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). However, the open enrollment period is without a doubt an essential duty and we stand ready to work with you to ensure that this critical service for seniors moves forward without a hitch despite the reckless politics that we are seeing in Washington.

As seniors explore their options, it is critical that all resources and assistance provided by CMS are as readily accessible as they have been in prior years. To protect seniors, we urge you to act swiftly if any problems stemming from the government shutdown arise during the open enrollment period. Should the need arise, we ask you to consider ways to protect seniors such as extension of the open enrollment period. We stand ready to work with you to guarantee a seamless open enrollment period.

Sincerely,

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

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