



March 30, 2018

The Honorable Congressman Christopher Collins
1117 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Collins:

As providers of home health care services to almost 35,000 Medicare beneficiaries in your Congressional District and counties encompassing your district, we write to thank you and convey our strong support for passage of the “Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act” (H.R. 1825).

We are encouraged to hear of your resounding support for this measure and greatly appreciate your commitment to see the bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives this year. We would be pleased if you could include this letter in the record of support for this measure, and let us know if there are any further actions we can take to bolster this commonsense and urgently needed bill.

As you know, H.R. 1825 and its companion in the Senate (S. 445) would allow nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists and other non-physician advanced-practice professionals to order and certify Medicare home health services. Non-physician practitioners (NPPs) are already allowed to conduct other activities in lieu of physicians. These clinicians have an increasingly vital role in our health care system. Their clinical training and expertise permit them to oversee a range of patient care responsibilities, including authorization of nursing home services for Medicare beneficiaries.

At a time when the health care system is looking to home care as a less costly alternative setting, it only makes sense to allow for equitable standards of service authorization. NPP ordering and

referring permissions for home care would properly incentivize community-based services and allow for the prompt facilitation of services in the setting where most patients prefer to be – at home. This flexibility is especially important in many of the rural areas we serve throughout Western New York, including in the counties of Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Monroe, Livingston and Ontario, where access to primary care services is enough of a struggle without the added demand on physicians to be the sole gatekeeper for facilitating access to home care. Just as they are filling an important role in primary care, NPPs can also fulfill an equally important access-to-care bridge in the planning and authorization of home care.

Studies also show that the current process of requiring physician sign-off is unnecessarily expensive. For instance, Dobson Davanzo and Associates, a health economics and policy research firm, estimates a five-year savings of \$82.5 million resulting from more flexibility.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us to learn more about the importance of this bill for delivering services to Medicare beneficiaries in your district. We thank you for your support.

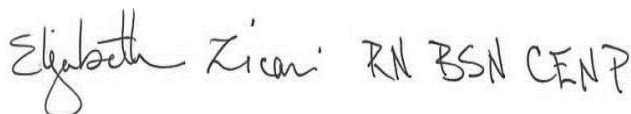
Sincerely,




Judy Baumgartner
President
Visiting Nurse Association of
Western New York, Inc.



Joyce Markiewicz
President & CEO of Home & Community Based Care
Executive Vice President
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President
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