

July 23, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM), representing the nation's more than 44,000 hospitalists, writes to express our concern regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill recently approved by the Committee, wherein the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) and the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) would be virtually eliminated.

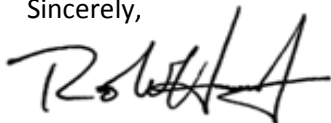
The decrease in funding for the CMMI would essentially terminate all of its demonstration efforts, which is deeply troubling. Many hospitalists are currently participating or preparing to participate in CMMI's Bundled Payment for Care Improvement (BPCI) Model 2 – Retrospective Acute and Post-Acute Care Episode. In some markets, hospitalists are admitting over 20 bundles, which presents opportunity for tremendous Medicare savings. The CMMI was created to transform and improve healthcare and has proven to be a critically important tool in addressing the complex challenges to our health system. Yet, this bill would eliminate critical funding that is helping to address out of control cost growth, improve the quality of care delivered, and produce the best outcomes for the most patients – all while reducing overall costs. This funding cut would be detrimental to the innovative and high quality care just beginning to take hold across the nation, in no small part the result of CMMI efforts. We strongly urge you to oppose this massively disruptive and counterproductive funding cut.

Also of concern to SHM is the elimination of AHRQ, which would hinder progress toward improvement of the healthcare system and patient safety. AHRQ has funded research on information technology, checklist-based interventions that have markedly decreased central line infections and surgical complications, as well as patient safety websites that receive up to 1 million visits a year– all of which contribute to critical enhancements in hospitals nationwide that save both lives and dollars.

The work being done by the CMMI and AHRQ are pivotal to continued improvements in the quality and efficiency of our Nation's healthcare. We therefore urge you to oppose these destructive funding cuts and any bill that seeks to do the same.

For more information on SHM or hospitalists in general, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Boswell, Director of Government Relations at jboswell@hospitalmedicine.org.

Sincerely,



Robert Harrington, Jr., MD, SFHM
President, Society of Hospital Medicine