

December 9, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Donald Berwick, M.D.  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius and Dr. Berwick:

A rapidly aging society and the rise of chronic disease are putting an unsustainable burden on our health system. Through the administration and oversight of Medicare and Medicaid, you play a central role in providing nearly \$70 billion in home healthcare for America's seniors.

Remote monitoring technology can play a pivotal role in ensuring that these beneficiaries are getting the care they need, while simultaneously improving quality and reducing unnecessary costs. We urge you to take steps to make these technologies more accessible.

The rationale for use of the patient-based remote monitoring systems within the Medicare and Medicaid home care benefits is strong:

- 1. Well-Aligned with Bipartisan Medicare and Medicaid Reforms:** Remote monitoring systems are tightly aligned with the policy objectives of an array of Medicare and Medicaid reform initiatives with strong bipartisan support. For example, remote monitoring systems can help support the following objectives: chronic case management and coordination, reducing hospital readmissions, promotion of health information technology, expanded home care options for seniors, promotion of independent living, reducing Medicaid dependence on costly institutional care, value-based purchasing for home health and improving quality and care coordination for dual eligibles across the Medicare and Medicaid programs. .
- 2. Directly Supports Objectives of Patient-Centered, Evidenced-Based, Cost-Effective Care:** The nation's top clinicians, policymakers and researchers are in wide agreement on the need for healthcare delivery that is patient-centered, evidenced-based and cost-effective. As the recently-released RAND study *Health and Well-Being in the Home* states, "Technological advances have pushed the frontier of care management further and further into the home setting, and today tools are available that go well beyond mere monitoring and narrow functionalities, allowing for the integration of monitoring and therapeutic systems, providing simple, understandable educational content and enabling communication and data flow between the patient, caregivers and professional healthcare providers. Such solutions have the potential to not only support current care delivery, but to fundamentally change the model into a more efficient and more patient centered one." A new Institute of Medicine report, *The Role of Human Factors in Home Health Care: Workshop Summary* also highlights the potential for home health technologies to significantly support these objectives.
- 3. Proven to Reduce Costs and Improve Care:** Remote monitoring technology is already proven to improve care and reduce costs. Through use of remote monitoring technology for veterans living at home, the Veterans Health Administration realized:
  - 25 percent reduction in inpatient utilization
  - 19 percent reduction in hospital admissions
  - 86 percent satisfaction rate of veterans being treated at home

**4. Critical to Meet Workforce Shortages and efficiencies:** Already, 80% of all long term care is provided by family caregivers. Their role in helping patients adhere to their care plans cannot be overstated, but even the most devoted family caregiver cannot replace trained healthcare professionals. Yet the U.S. faces a serious and growing shortage of home health professionals, including nurses, therapists, and aides. Remote monitoring systems are critically important to extend the capacity and accessibility of the professional home healthcare workforce and improve healthcare professional and patient/caregiver coordination.

#### **Request for Medicare-Medicaid Demonstration**

While the case is already compelling, further evidence is needed to show the powerful benefits of home healthcare when integrated with and supported by remote monitoring technologies. This is the missing link to propel adoption in Medicare and Medicaid, which provide the bulk of the nation's home care and serve the most vulnerable patients.

A large-scale demonstration is needed to show that the same positive results achieved in the VA project can also be achieved in Medicare and Medicaid, with their more complex patient populations and broader home care benefits. The demonstration could be done through the new Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, the FY 2012 HHS appropriation, or future Medicare-Medicaid amendments.

Patient-based remote monitoring systems show tremendous promise for helping Medicare and Medicaid maintain and improve home healthcare for America's seniors. We sincerely urge you to support this large-scale demonstration project.

Sincerely,



**Richard D. Brennan, Jr.**  
Director  
Home Care Technology Association of America



**Val Halamandaris**  
President  
National Association for Home Care & Hospice



**Andy Carter**  
President and CEO  
Visiting Nurse Associations of America



**Brent Shafer**  
President, Home Healthcare Solutions  
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