

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2020

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Verma,

In February of this year, we wrote to express concerns regarding the proposed Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Radiation Oncology Alternative Payment Model (RO Model), which would dramatically change Medicare reimbursement for radiation oncology services across the country. After hearing from leading cancer care providers in Pennsylvania and the surrounding region, we shared our concern about the proposed size and scope of the proposal and the negative impact it could have on cancer patients' care.

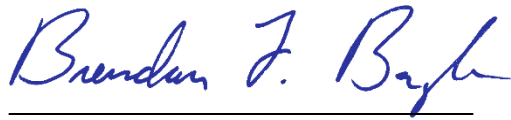
Despite our concerns, as well as those expressed by many other stakeholders, CMS finalized the RO Model with extremely minor modifications that do not significantly improve it and gave providers approximately 90 days to prepare for these considerable changes. One month after CMS finalized the RO Model, the Agency delayed the start of the model until July 2021 to reflect feedback from the cancer community. While this short reprieve is appreciated, it still does not provide adequate time and resources for the 70+ sites across Pennsylvania that are mandated to participate in the model and concerns remain with the model design itself.

Our Pennsylvania providers support CMS' goal of improving the quality of care for cancer patients receiving radiotherapy and moving toward a more simplified and predictable payment system, but believe the Model, as currently finalized, is neither simple nor predictable. We strongly encourage CMS to re-evaluate the Model's payment methodology, so it does not penalize those providers mandated to participate. We remain concerned that the combination of the tight implementation timeline and the reduced reimbursement, particularly during a public health emergency, creates an undue burden to an already strained healthcare system.

It is critically important patients receive the care they need and delaying the implementation and reducing the cuts will allow providers time and resources to adjust to the new model. On behalf of the providers and patients impacted in Pennsylvania and throughout the country, we request that CMS delay implementation until January 1, 2022 and that you revise the RO-Model payment methodology so that the discounts in the model are no more than 3 percent.

We look forward to working with you to resolve these issues so that RO providers can solely focus on patient care at this critical time.

Sincerely,



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress