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William E Baucom M.D. FACP

5653 Frist Blvd.

Hermitage, TN, 37076

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of Synergy IPA in Nashville TN, I am writing in response to the proposals in the Medicare Advantage (MA) Advance Notice and Call Letter of 2019. I wanted to take the opportunity to emphasize my appreciation of the steps taken to further strengthen the Medicare Advantage industry. My group and I have opposed positions in the past so I felt obliged to write in support of the overall nature of this recent announcement. The reason is the core value for my MA patients. I strongly believe that MA helps advance their quality of life and actually helps me better manage my entire Senior patient population.

My own mother benefited tremendously from a program initiated by CIGNA Healthspring Medicare Advantage. Prior to her death from breast cancer last year, she was a patient in Aspire, a palliative care program that CIGNA Healthspring helped get started. This innovative program was tremendously effective in alleviating her pain, and reduced her need for hospital admission. In fact, she required no hospital inpatient care for several years prior to her transitioning into hospice. CIGNA HealthSpring Medicare Advantage was very forward thinking in adopting this program, which both increased quality and decreased cost

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to connect the dots with respect to what I believe are the goals of CMS. My MA experience has formed my group’s transition from a fee for service practice to a practice that focuses on value and quality. I will not go into the details, but the relationship I have with Cigna-HealthSpring has driven the transition of this practice toward population management and coordination of care within what you know is a system that is still driven by fee for service. So again, thank you for what I am seeing as a support of this very important option for my patients and for an industry that is helping drive the transition in the industry toward what we all hope is a more sustainable model.

Sincerely,

William E Baucom M.D. FACP

Synergy IPA