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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

STEVE ISRAEL
Third District, New York

August 24, 2016

Andrew M. Slavitt
Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Carolyn W. Colvin
Acting Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Acting Administrator Slavitt and Acting Commissioner Colvin:

I am writing to express my concern with the current Medicare enrollment and reinstatement process. The process is cumbersome and difficult for beneficiaries to navigate. I urge you to review and streamline this system.

The Medicare program is an essential part of the United States health care system. Millions of our senior citizens and those that are disabled, the most vulnerable of our society, rely on this program for their health needs. Therefore, it is critical that the procedure for enrolling and reinstating Medicare coverage is not burdensome and is efficient.

Recently a number of constituents have called my office seeking assistance with Medicare enrollment and reinstatement. As the system involves both the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), it is complex and can be difficult to navigate. While one agency is responsible for crediting payment, namely CMS, the SSA is responsible for reinstating or enrolling individuals in Medicare. Often times, individuals who have acted in good faith are caught in the shuffle between these two agencies. Indeed even my office was told by each agency that it was the responsibility of the other to reinstate an individual who had been terminated. This confusion is not only frustrating, it can also be deadly. One of my constituents who is battling cancer was forced to delay treatment due to a back and forth between the SSA and CMS. This is entirely unacceptable.

I encourage you to review the procedures involved in enrollment and reinstatement so that they are more organized and timely. It is imperative that my constituents and all of our citizens across the country are able to depend on Medicare for their health care needs.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Steve Israel

STEVE ISRAEL
Member of Congress