

## United States Senate

August 29, 2018

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

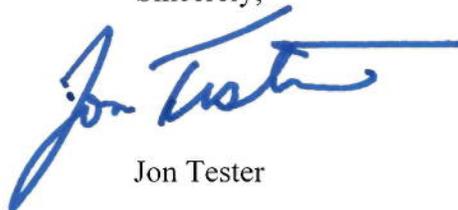
Dear Administrator Verma:

I write to follow up on my letter of November 9, 2017, regarding resident physician training in critical access hospitals. As of October 2013, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) ended Medicare graduate medical education payments to hospitals that incur the costs of residents who spend a portion of their training time at critical access hospitals (CAHs). This rule has hampered efforts to increase the number of physicians who train, and ultimately practice, in rural communities. I appreciate your response of February 13, 2018, indicating your willingness to reevaluate this issue and consider appropriate next steps.

I wish to draw your attention to language included in the report accompanying the fiscal year 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill recently passed by the full Senate. In this report, the Senate recognizes the barrier that CMS's rule poses to rural resident training, and "encourages CMS to...consider revisions that better support hospitals' efforts to train more resident physicians in rural settings like CAHs". I have a strong commitment to addressing physician workforce shortages in rural and underserved communities, and I am pleased to see my colleagues support that work with this report language.

I respectfully request a response indicating what steps CMS has taken or is currently undertaking to reexamine this rule, what revisions to the rule CMS is considering, and a timeline for implementation of any such revisions. I appreciate your ongoing attention to this important issue, and I look forward to working with you to bring more physicians to rural communities.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester