

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2402

June 14, 2010

Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy
Director
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
540 Gaither Road, #2000
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Dr. Clancy:

The medication therapy management (MTM) grant program under Section 3503 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), P.L. 111-148, enjoyed broad, bipartisan support and was included in both the House and Senate versions of the bill. Section 3503 creates a grant program within the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) that will enable certain targeted individuals with chronic diseases to benefit from MTM services. MTM services have demonstrated improved patient outcomes and lower costs in various settings and, with expanded access, could enhance the health of countless Americans.

The congressional intent of PPACA is to address the medication use gaps that are currently present in our health care system as soon as practicable. To that end, I support the timely initiation and implementation of the MTM grant program in Section 3503.

Under the current health care system, we incur costs associated with inappropriate medication use – a 2006 Institute of Medicine report estimated that there are at least 1.5 million preventable adverse drug events that occur in the United States each year. Medication errors are among the most common medical mistakes, resulting in at least \$100 billion per year in extra hospital costs. While there are various ways to approach initiating the MTM grants, funding utilized under comparative effectiveness research would not add any financial burdens to the federal treasury.

As early efforts have demonstrated, increased utilization of MTM services by patients holds the promise of improving the health of individuals with chronic diseases and reducing overall health costs through a reduction in adverse drug events, better adherence to medication regimens, and a reduction in avoidable hospital readmissions. The MTM grant program will ensure increased capacity for patient access to high quality MTM services.

Thank you for your prompt attention to the timely initiation and implementation of the MTM grant program in Section 3503.

Sincerely,



THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator

TC/wc