

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2026

The Honorable Mehmet Oz, MD
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Oz:

As bipartisan representatives focused on ensuring seniors' access to care in rural communities, we urge the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to establish Medicare payment parity for medical visits administered via telehealth by Community Health Centers (CHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs).

In many of our districts, CHCs and RHCs are the primary and often only source of low-cost, high-quality primary care for Medicare beneficiaries. Long distances, limited transportation, and persistent workforce shortages can make accessing CHC and RHC services in person difficult for our older constituents. Telehealth has therefore become a routine and necessary means of delivering care that can reduce preventable ER visits and hospital admissions, lowering long-term taxpayer spending on healthcare.

Data from the Health Resources and Services Administration's Uniform Data System (UDS) and the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) highlight the importance of supporting these providers in reaching remote communities. CHCs currently serve approximately 4 million seniors nationwide, and one in three rural residents receives care at a CHC. Additionally, RHCs serve approximately 2.3 million Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries. It is clear that both CHCs and RHCs play a significant role in delivering Medicare services where alternatives are limited.

Telehealth is firmly integrated into community-based care delivery. Approximately 98 percent of HRSA-funded CHCs use telehealth for primary care, while over 66 percent of RHCs report utilizing telehealth to provide medical services. Among seniors, reliance on telehealth and particularly audio-only visits is substantial, reflecting broadband limitations, distance to care, and technology constraints common in rural areas.

These challenges are compounded by rural provider shortages. Although rural areas are home to roughly 20 percent of the U.S. population, they are served by fewer than 10 percent of the nation's physicians, resulting in significantly lower primary care supply per capita.

CMS has already recognized these realities for behavioral health services. Since January 1, 2022, Medicare has treated telehealth behavioral health visits at CHCs and RHCs as equivalent to in-person encounters and reimbursed them through the Prospective Payment System (PPS) and All-Inclusive Rate (AIR).

However, medical telehealth visits are still subject to a temporary special payment methodology that reimburses well below PPS and AIR rates, despite comparable clinical work and practice costs. This inconsistency undermines provider sustainability and limits continued investment in telehealth infrastructure relied upon by rural patients.

Congress has demonstrated bipartisan support for maintaining Medicare telehealth access through legislative efforts such as the *Telehealth Modernization Act*, the *CONNECT for Health Act*, and the *HEALTH Act*. CMS payment policy should align with this direction. Accordingly, we ask that CMS do the following:

- Establish Medicare payment parity for medical telehealth visits administered by CHCs and RHCs;
- Allow medical telehealth services, including audio-only visits, to be reimbursed through PPS and AIR methodologies; and
- Provide clear and stable guidance so rural providers can plan and invest in telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries.

Consistent payment policy across in-person, video, and audio-only care is essential to maintaining access for seniors who live far from providers. We trust that under your leadership, CMS will urgently take the necessary steps to implement these long-overdue improvements to Medicare telehealth payment policies.

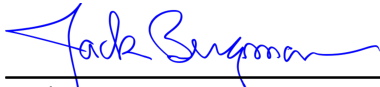
Sincerely,



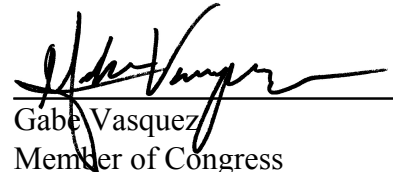
Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



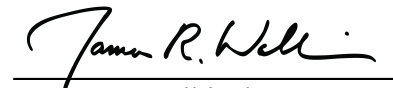
Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



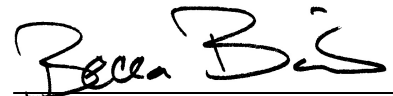
Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



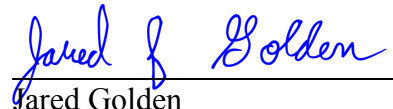
Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
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Tracey Mann
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
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Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



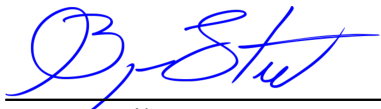
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



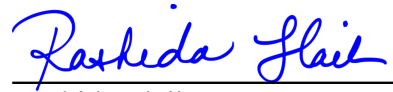
Derrick Van Orden
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Terri A. Sewell
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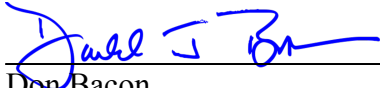
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Chris Pappas
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Mark E. Amodei
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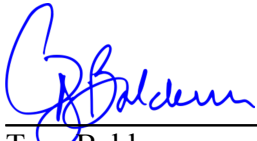
Juan Ciscomani
Member of Congress



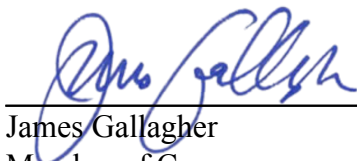
Young Kim
Member of Congress



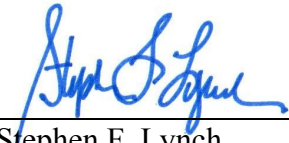
Monica De La Cruz
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Troy Balderson
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James Gallagher
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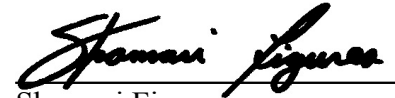
Stephen F. Lynch
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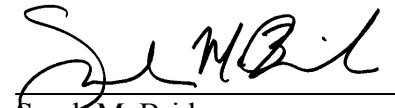
Donald G. Davis
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Doris Matsui
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Shomari Figures
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Sarah McBride
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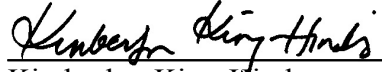
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



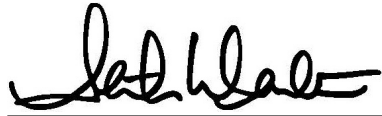
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



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Kimberlyn King-Hinds
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Seth Moulton
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Dina Titus
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Susie Lee
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Linda T. Sánchez
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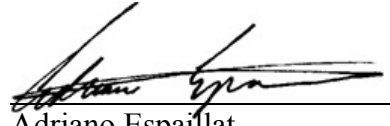
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



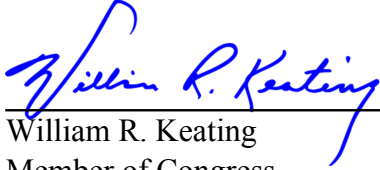
George Latimer
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Adenta S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



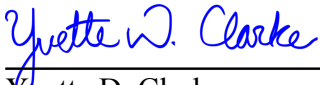
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



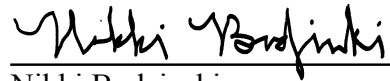
William R. Keating
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Chrissy Houlahan
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Yvette D. Clarke
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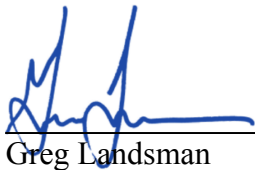
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



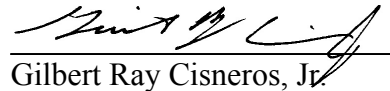
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



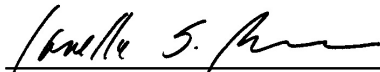
Ed Case
Member of Congress



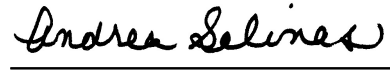
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress



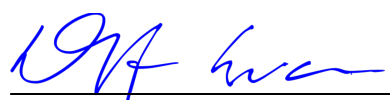
Andrea Salinas
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Nellie Pou
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Brittany Petersen
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Dwight Evans
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Ayanna Pressley
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