

June 5, 2014

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1233 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ron Kind  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1502 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressmen Ryan and Kind:

The undersigned companies and organizations, representing consumers, employers, insurers, analytics firms, physicians, hospitals, and research organizations are pleased to endorse HR 4418, the Expanding the Availability of Medicare Data Act. This much-needed legislation would expand the scope and uses of data under the Qualified Entity (QE) program and establish strict procedures to ensure that the data remains secure and patient information is protected.

The explosion in health costs in recent decades owes in large part to the lack of sound performance measures for health care providers. Analyses based on data can yield insights with respect to practice patterns that, in turn, will allow consumers and health plans to make better-informed choices while providing timely feedback to providers.

Unfortunately, the existing QE statute is ill-suited to these purposes. QEs may only use subsets of claims data for the limited purpose of publishing aggregate, non-provider-specific analyses. HR 4418 addresses this deficiency by permitting non-public uses of data by responsible commercial and nonprofit entities. Among the potential benefits are better health plan designs and improved comparison-shopping tools for consumers. Providers also will benefit as they strive to improve value and implement alternative payment models.

HR 4418 incorporates verbatim the QE provisions of HR 4015, the bicameral, bipartisan SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act, which passed the House on March 14. As the product of carefully crafted compromises, HR 4418 merits prompt consideration and passage at the earliest opportunity.

Again, we are pleased to express our strong support for HR 4418, the Expanding the Availability of Medicare Data Act. We look forward to working with you and your staffs in addressing the root causes of America's troubling health cost spiral.

Sincerely,

Council for Affordable Health Coverage  
AARP  
Center for Improving Value in Healthcare  
National Retail Federation  
National Association of Manufacturers  
ThedaCare Center for Healthcare Value  
Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality

National Coalition on Health Care  
Blue Shield of California  
Health Care Cost Institute  
National Association of Health Underwriters  
Pacific Business Group on Health  
Wisconsin Medical Society