

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 29, 2015

The Honorable Andrew M. Slavitt
Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Mr. Slavitt:

As longstanding proponents of improving colorectal cancer screening rates among Medicare beneficiaries, we are writing in regard to the disconcerting cuts to colonoscopy in Medicare's Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule. Our goal is to reduce barriers to colorectal cancer screening in a manner that is also consistent with the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) collaborative goal of 80 percent screening rates for the recommended population by 2018. Colorectal cancer screening is unique in that recommended screening is designed to prevent cancer from occurring in the first place.

Together, HHS and Congress have made tremendous strides in improving screening rates – no other country can boast the positive momentum we have had in saving lives from this disease. According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer incidence rates in the United States have dropped more than 30 percent over the past decade – the large declines over the past decade have been largely attributed to the detection and removal of precancerous polyps as a result of increased colorectal cancer screening.

However, colorectal cancer is still the number two cause of cancer related deaths in the United States and more must be done to increase the screening among Medicare beneficiaries, who are at high risk of colorectal cancer. Medicare beneficiaries account for two-thirds of the more than 133,000 new cases of colorectal cancer each year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concludes that removing precancerous polyps through colonoscopy can not only reduce the risk of colorectal cancer but also reduce the number of deaths from the disease by 53 percent. We strongly agree that we must continue to increase access to and utilization of services such as colorectal cancer screening, which have been historically underutilized.

In light of the Agency's pending proposal to reduce Medicare fee for service reimbursement for colorectal cancer screening and colonoscopy by 10 to 20 percent next year, we feel compelled to express concern that these cuts could jeopardize recent progress and a budding public health success story. Accordingly, we hope you will carefully consider the solicited stakeholder comments on the proposed rule before determining whether cuts of this magnitude are justified by the evidence and are in the interests of Medicare beneficiaries. We remain hopeful that Congress and the Agency can work together to implement consistent policies to further reduce colorectal cancer incidence and mortality.

Together we can help to facilitate this "80 percent by 2018" goal and we look forward to strengthening the Medicare program on behalf of our constituents and Americans nationwide.

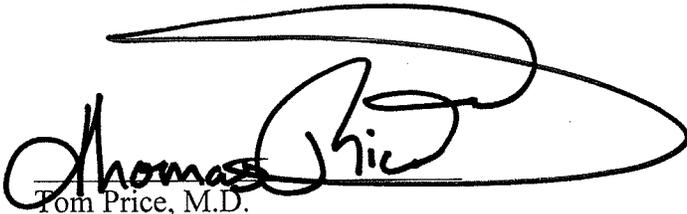
Sincerely,



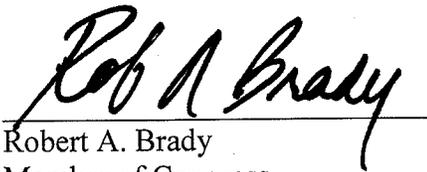
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



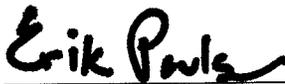
Tom Price, M.D.
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



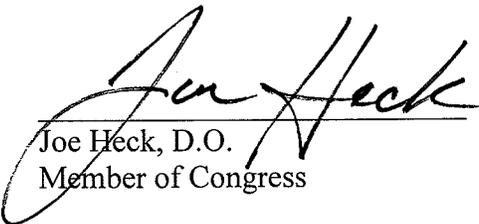
Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



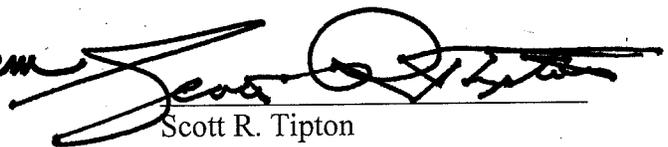
Joe Heck, D.O.
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



Scott R. Tipton
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

Denny Heck

Denny Heck
Member of Congress

Jim McGovern

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Devin Nunes

Devin Nunes
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Tim Walz

Tim Walz
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Chris Collins

Chris Collins
Member of Congress

Steve Womack

Steve Womack
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters

Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

David P. Joyce

David P. Joyce
Member of Congress

Pat Tiberi

Pat Tiberi
Member of Congress

French Hill

French Hill
Member of Congress

Brad Wenstrup

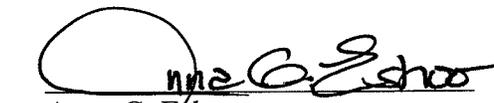
Brad Wenstrup
Member of Congress

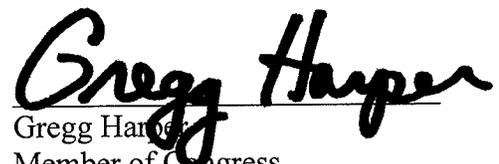

Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress


Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress

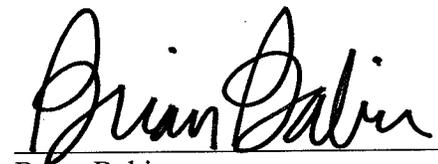

David Scott
Member of Congress

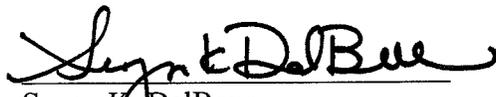

Michael F. Doyle
Member of Congress


Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress


Gregg Harper
Member of Congress

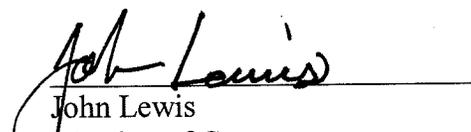

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress


Brian Babin
Member of Congress

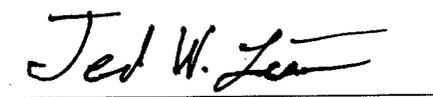

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress


Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress


Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress


John Lewis
Member of Congress


Phil Roe
Member of Congress


Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



Richard Nugent
Member of Congress



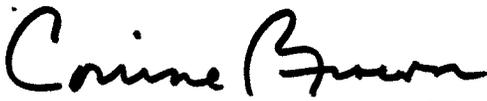
Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



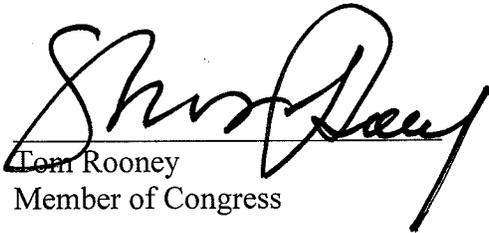
Joe Barton
Member of Congress



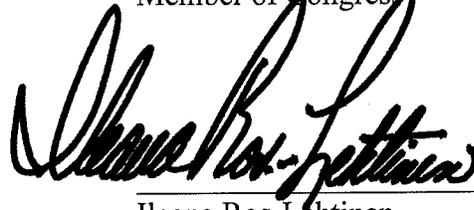
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Tom Rooney
Member of Congress



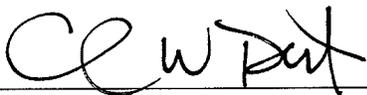
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



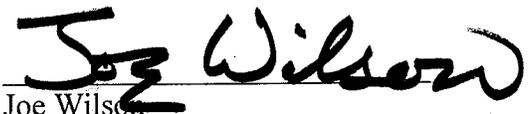
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



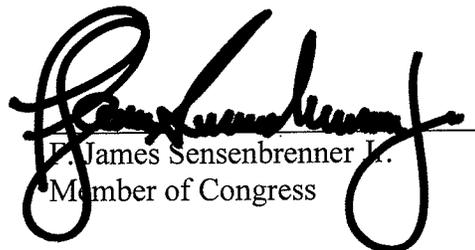
Charlie Dent
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

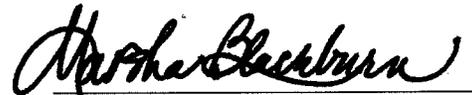


James Sensenbrenner Jr.
Member of Congress


Betty McCollum
Member of Congress


Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

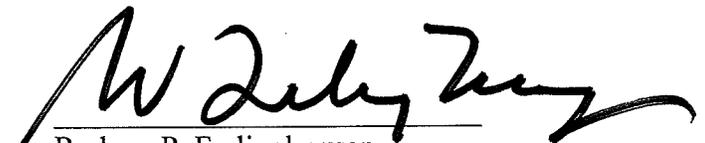

Adam Smith
Member of Congress


Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress


Barbara Lee
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress


G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress


Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Member of Congress

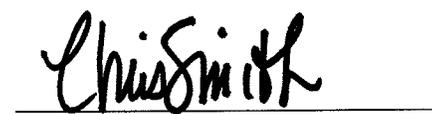

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

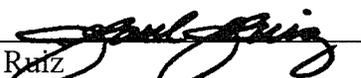

Albio Sires
Member of Congress


Joe Courtney
Member of Congress


Charles Rangel
Member of Congress


Steve Chabot
Member of Congress


Christopher Smith
Member of Congress


Raul Ruiz
Member of Congress

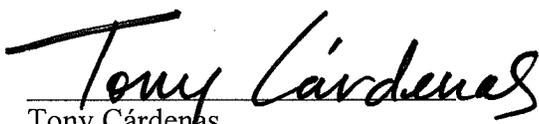

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

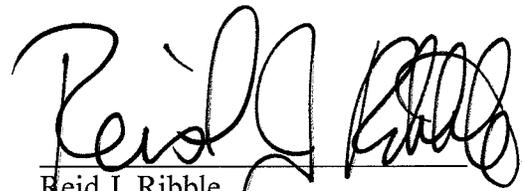

Sam Graves
Member of Congress


Tim Ryan
Member of Congress


Ron Kind
Member of Congress


Mark Takano
Member of Congress


Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

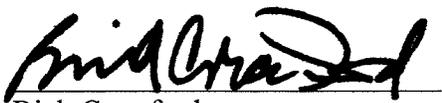

Reid J. Ribble
Member of Congress

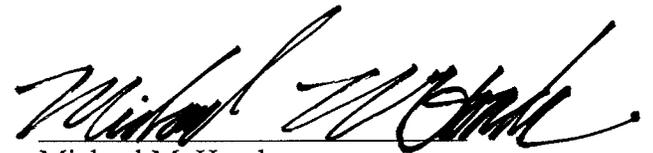

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress


Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

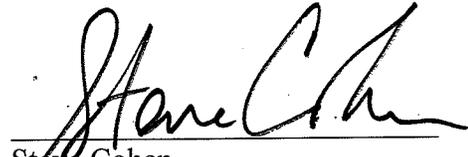

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

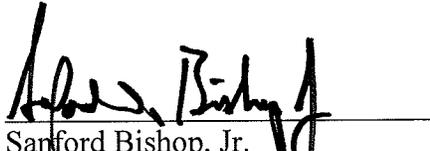

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

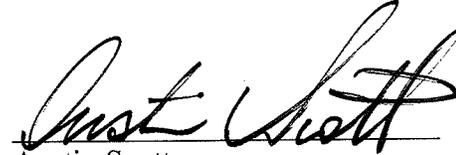

Rick Crawford
Member of Congress


Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

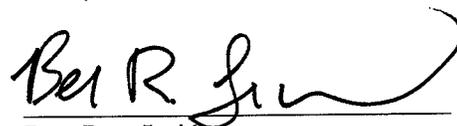

Michael Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

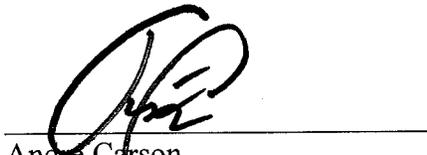

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

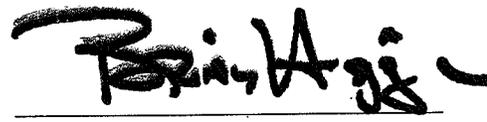

Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress


Austin Scott
Member of Congress

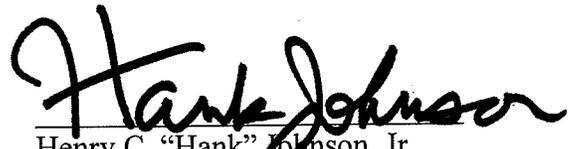

Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress


Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress


Andre Carson
Member of Congress


Brian Higgins
Member of Congress


Paul Tonko
Member of Congress


Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress


Patrick McHenry
Member of Congress


Patrick Murphy
Member of Congress