

To the Editor:

When Congress was unable to reach an agreement last year on how to reduce future budget deficits, they put into place plans for automatic across-the-board spending cuts, including more than \$100 billion in potential cuts to Medicare. These cuts have the potential to result in disastrous changes to the care that people with kidney failure rely upon. I worry that reduced payments for dialysis could mean closed facilities, longer travel time and not having the support services that help keep me healthy.

When my kidneys failed in 1990, I was overwhelmed with what the future might hold. Patients with kidney failure must either receive a kidney transplant, or undergo three-times-weekly dialysis treatments to remove toxins from the blood. Only a very small number of patients receive a transplant, so hundreds of thousands of Americans – like me – rely on lifesaving dialysis treatments to survive.

Because dialysis is so essential for kidney failure patients, Medicare covers the cost of treatments regardless of age for people on dialysis. These services keep us healthy, happy, and able to lead normal, productive lives. Sequestration cuts to Medicare threaten the quality of care I currently enjoy.

I hope my fellow community members will contact Congress to encourage them to refrain from cutting funding for dialysis care.

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