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November 18, 2019

The Honorable Alex M. Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

I am writing to you from my unique perspective of both being an End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patient undergoing dialysis treatments and a Member of Congress. As you know, chronic kidney disease has been a severely under recognized public health crisis for decades. It is estimated to affect 37 million people in the United States – many of whom do not know they have it. It is the ninth leading cause of death in the United States, surpassing breast cancer and prostate cancer. In 2016, over 500,000 patients were on dialysis and over 200,000 were living with a kidney transplant.

I understand that on July 10, 2019, President Trump signed Executive Order 13879, Advancing American Kidney Health, which will encourage the use of home dialysis for ESRD patients. Based on my experience, the patient's voice can often get lost in the discussions of how to improve the delivery of care. Because I support preserving and protecting patient choice, I believe patients should be able to decide whether they want to receive dialysis treatment at home or at a dialysis center.

On July 25, 2019, CMS proposed a mandatory ESRD Treatment Choices Model as a first step towards fulfilling the Executive Order. While I support home dialysis, I am concerned this may force some patients into home dialysis who otherwise would not choose this modality. According to the *American Journal of Kidney Diseases*, patients face barriers to home dialysis care, including the lack of a caregiver and a shortage of storage space for dialysis equipment and supplies.

I know that you personally have also been impacted by this disease, and like me, want to ensure that the best interest of the patients remains the priority. For this reason, I urge the Department not to move forward with the demonstration in its current form and welcome the opportunity to discuss specific modifications that should be made prior to its implementation. Thank you for your consideration of my request and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress