

October 7, 2021

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
CMS-10765

RE: Patient Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospitals

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

My name is Chris Chappa and I was a patient at Shannon Rehabilitation Hospital. I am writing you to ask that you terminate Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) review choice demonstration for inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRF RCD). It is my understanding that the proposed demonstration will require IRFs to submit to a review process for all traditional Medicare claims submitted for payment.

My journey began when I was diagnosed with Covid on 7/26/21. I was admitted into the hospital on 7/30/21. During my acute care stay, I struggled to recover and eventually had a stroke due to a blood clot. I lost the function of the left side of my body. After recovering from Covid, I was transferred to Shannon Rehabilitation Hospital, an affiliate of Encompass Health, on 8/16/21. During my 29 day stay at this rehab hospital, with the amazing help of the physical therapy and occupational therapy, I was able to regain function in my left leg. I came to this rehab hospital in a gurney and was able leave, walking out with my family. From my personal experience, access to an inpatient rehabilitation hospital is very beneficial for recovery for any patient. Please do not limit patient access to rehab care. Our community needs these rehabilitation hospitals.

The demonstration proposal has been released during a time when health care providers are already stretched thin because of the emotional, physical, and financial toll of a global pandemic. If this demonstration takes place, this will simply become another burden for clinicians and non-clinical staff. IRFs provide critical services that leave a lasting effect on patients' lives. The care provided by IRFs positively impacts the overall health and quality of life of the communities the facility is a part of.

The current design of this demonstration has the potential to limit access to care for patients and permanently change the types of patients who receive IRF services. IRFs could be forced to turn patients away who need their services.

I urge CMS to halt this demonstration and engage with providers and stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of Medicare standards for IRF services. As healthcare providers continue to battle on the front lines of the pandemic we should be doing all we can to support them as they help their communities recover from their most difficult health battles and regain their lives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Chris and Jessica Chappa*

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