

10/6/21

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

Administrator Brooks-LaSure,

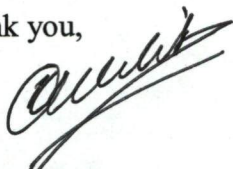
My name is Khalid Malik, MD. As a Neurologist and Medical Director of Wadley Medical Center's Stroke Program, I am writing today to raise concerns about the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Review Choice Demonstration for Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities (IRF RCD).

I care for the majority of stroke patients in our region as well as a large number of patients suffering from the debilitating effects of neurologic conditions. Inpatient rehabilitation hospitals are an instrumental part of the healing process for these patients. The therapy and around the clock care provided in these hospitals is in large part why patients can return home to their families after recovering. Without the specialized care provided by inpatient rehabilitation hospitals, many of these patients would have little to no quality of life. The vast majority enter a rehabilitation hospital unable to walk, and then leave on their own two feet, which is a miraculous sight for these patients, their caregivers and family.

I am concerned the review choice demonstration will make the intensive rehabilitation therapy provided at rehabilitation hospitals inaccessible for many patients. The AHA/ASA strongly recommends stroke patients in particular should be treated in rehabilitation hospitals. Without question, patients forced to seek post-acute care in other settings will face worse outcomes overall. By questioning the judgment of physicians on the level of care their patients need, I am afraid the review choice demonstration will be detrimental to the access to the level of care these patients deserve.

In conclusion, as a primary provider for Neurology care in Texarkana, TX, I hope CMS reconsiders and does not move forward with a review choice demonstration in rehabilitation hospitals.

Thank you,



Khalid Malik, MD