

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 29, 2011

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling, Co-Chair
The Honorable Patty Murray, Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
825B Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative Hensarling and Senator Murray:

We are writing to ask that you consider including strong measures to reduce waste and fraud in Medicare and Medicaid in the proposal the Joint Select Committee makes to Congress this fall.

Each year, Medicare and Medicaid lose tens of billions of dollars to waste, fraud and abuse. According to estimates prepared by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the two programs together made an estimated \$70 billion dollars in improper payments in fiscal year 2010. In addition, experts believe that these two vital programs will likely lose tens of billions of dollars in fraud each year as well. Without a doubt, waste and fraud from Medicare and Medicaid are a major drain from the federal budget.

However, there are clear steps Congress can take to greatly reduce the amount of money lost each year to waste and fraud in Medicare and Medicaid. A number of those steps are included in legislation we introduced this summer, *The Medicare and Medicare Fighting Fraud and Abuse to Save Taxpayers Dollars Act* (S. 1251) – or the “FAST” Act (see attached). The legislation has already garnered a substantial number of bipartisan cosponsors in the Senate.

Each of the FAST Act provisions aims to greatly enhance program integrity efforts underway at Medicare and Medicaid to prevent waste and fraud. Among its provisions, the legislation would:

- enact stronger penalties for Medicare and Medicaid fraud;
- establish stronger prevention strategies to help phase out the practice of “pay and chase;”
- curb the theft of physician and beneficiary identities;
- improve the sharing of fraud data across agencies; and
- deploy cutting-edge technology to better identify and prevent fraud.

This bipartisan bill does not make changes to coverage for beneficiaries or change medical service pricing. Because of its common-sense approach, the legislation has garnered support from a number of organizations including AARP, Citizens Against Government Waste, the National Taxpayers Union and Taxpayers for Common Sense. In fact, most of the provisions are based on findings and recommendations from the Government Accountability Office, the HHS

The millions of Americans who depend on Medicare and Medicaid will benefit when these programs are strengthened through the prevention of waste and fraud. In order to protect the programs' finances and the Americans who count on them, we respectfully request that you adopt the FAST Act as part of your final plan.

Sincerely,



Tom Carper
United States Senator



Tom Coburn M.D.
United States Senator

Attachments: Legislative Text, List of Cosponsors and
Section-By-Section Analysis
CC: Committee Members