



November 14, 2019

The Honorable Ed Case
US House of Representatives
2443 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Case,

On behalf of the 51 physician members of the East Hawaii Independent Physicians Association (EHI IPA), I want to thank you for your efforts to help mitigate the accelerating shortage of physicians in Hawaii, and particularly here on the Big Island. Making the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) aware of the unique costs associated with the provision of care in our state through the joint letter sent to CMS Administrator Verma of September 27, 2019 from Senator Schatz, Senator Hirono, Congresswoman Gabbard and you, is greatly appreciated.

EHI IPA members regularly deal with the many geographic challenges associated with the provision of health care services in a remote, rural area such as ours where both primary care and specialty services are severely lacking. These geographic challenges not only make it difficult for patients to access care (often requiring travel to Oahu), but also drive up the cost of that care.

In addition to the geographic hurdles faced in rural Hawaii, you are well aware that Medicare reimbursements in Hawaii are among the lowest in the nation while the state's cost of living ranks among the highest. EHI IPA and other community and professional organizations in Hawaii must continue to work with your office to ensure that the Medicare reimbursement formula accurately captures these factors so that physicians can continue to provide high-quality care to our community members. Unless reimbursement for medical services are adequately (re)set to allow physician practices to remain financially viable and fairly reflect the true cost of care, the physician shortage crisis that currently exists in our state will only be exacerbated.

Thank you, again, for your efforts on behalf of your constituents and our members. EHI IPA will continue to work with you in order to achieve our mutual goals.

Sincerely,

Lynda Dolan, MD
President
East Hawaii Independent Physician Association

Cc: Kana Smith