**[Insert State Association Letterhead]**

**[Date]**

**[The Honorable XXXXXXX**

**Local District Office Address**

**City, State, Zip]**

Dear representative **[XXXXXXX]**:

I’m writing on behalf of the **[State Association]** regarding the limitations that beneficiaries currently face in Medicare when trying to access the services of doctors of chiropractic (DCs). The chiropractic benefit in Medicare, which dates back to 1972, is both written and interpreted by CMS regulators in such a way as to impose an arbitrary limit on services that doctors of chiropractic may provide (or order) for their patients. There is no valid scientific or policy basis for this limitation.

Medicare beneficiaries in **[state]** who require covered services that are “attendant to” the spinal manipulation service provided by doctors of chiropractic must obtain those services from another provider in order for Medicare to cover them. This requires the beneficiary to experience unnecessary delays, inconveniences and the added expense (time, travel, etc.) of seeing a second provider. If a DC determines that the beneficiary needs an X-ray, laboratory test or other diagnostic procedure, current policy does not even allow DCs to *order* those covered services. In such instances, further unnecessary visits and beneficiary expenses are required to obtain the required order from a second Medicare provider—who will often turn around (especially in the case of X-rays) and order the service from a *third* Medicare provider.

Doctors of chiropractic are licensed in all 50 states as portal-of-entry providers who treat the “whole body” and whose scope of practice—as defined by their respective state law—allows them to provide a broader range of services compared with what is currently allowed under Medicare. A typical state scope recognizes the ability and training of DCs to examine, diagnose, treat and refer. **Medicare coverage of the services of medical doctors and osteopaths is determined by state scope of practice. Likewise, the coverage for chiropractic services in Medicare should reflect the scope of practice determined appropriate by state authority.**

In addition, allowing Medicare beneficiaries greater access to **chiropractors can help alleviate the scourge of opioid overuse and abuse.** The chiropractic profession offers a non-drug, noninvasive approach to chronic low back pain management that is supported by research. This conservative approach may include trying spinal manipulation combined with exercise and stretching. Active self-care and complementary and integrative strategies may provide a solution for many chronic pain sufferers, especially in our senior population. In 2017, the American College of Physicians (ACP) updated its clinical guidelines for acute and chronic low back pain to promote the use of conservative treatments such as heat, massage, acupuncture and spinal manipulation before moving on to riskier treatments such as over the counter and prescription painkillers. It should be noted that all these conservative services are commonly offered by chiropractors, who are acknowledged experts in the use of spinal manipulation.

**Congress needs to address this issue. I urge you to cosponsor H.R. 1610 (the Chiropractic Medicare Coverage Modernization Act), bipartisan legislation introduced by your colleague Rep. Brian Higgins (D-N.Y.).** This bill will give seniors the right to choose their chiropractor for Medicare-covered services allowed under their state licensure. With Medicare currently serving more than 55 million Americans, and projections for that number to grow by a third over the next 10 years, we believe Congress should ensure patients have access to all forms of care to prevent high-cost interventions and prescription opioids. Note, **H.R. 1610 does not add new services to Medicare**; it simply allows a patient to access existing Medicare-covered services from their chiropractor if those services align with the chiropractor’s state scope of practice.

On behalf of Medicare beneficiaries in **[state]**, I urge you to contact Rep. Higgins and cosponsor H.R. 1610. If you would like further information on this issue, such as pertinent data or research, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

**[signature of appropriate state association representative]**

**Name and title of appropriate state association representative**