



September 15, 2024

The Honorable Jason Smith  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith,

The mission of the Missouri Rural Health Association (MRHA) is to provide leadership on rural priorities through advocacy, partnerships, and education. Our goal is to elevate the voices of rural Missourians to improve health and well-being.

Rural health care is in a state of crisis throughout the Missouri and the United States. Access to quality healthcare, and health care providers is on the decline for rural Missourians as rural hospitals continue to close at an alarming rate and more physicians seek greener pastures in more densely populated areas. We believe all Medicare beneficiaries should have the right to choose their licensed care provider under Medicare.

Chiropractic Physicians 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.

Currently, Medicare beneficiaries who require covered services in addition to spinal manipulation services provided by Chiropractic Physicians, 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 Chiropractic Physician determines that the beneficiary needs an X-ray, laboratory test or other diagnostic procedure, current policy does not even allow them 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.



For the long-term sustainability of our healthcare system, Congress must take decisive action and the time for action is now. Congress cannot afford to delay these critical steps any longer. Protecting access to quality physician care for rural communities is not just a matter of fiscal responsibility but also a moral imperative. Missouri's Medicare beneficiaries deserve quality healthcare, and it is our duty to ensure that they receive it without compromise.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Heidi N. Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Heidi N. Lucas  
Executive Director  
Missouri Rural Health Association