

ANGIE CRAIG
2ND DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2302

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INVESTIGATIONS & REGULATIONS

April 22, 2022

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of the millions of Americans who rely on Medicare for their health care coverage. Earlier this year, I led 37 of my colleagues in a letter urging the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to reevaluate Medicare Part B's 2022 premium increase. As CMS continues to reassess this rate increase, I write again today to reaffirm my support for reversing the increase and ensuring our seniors do not pay a dollar more than what is necessary.

As you know, Medicare Part B premiums increased in 2022 by a record 14.5%. One of the driving factors was the Food and Drug Administration's approval of the high-priced Alzheimer's treatment, Aduhelm, whose list price was initially \$56,000 a year. At the time, it was uncertain the extent to which the drug would be covered under Medicare, but it was clear it would be costly. A Kaiser Family Foundation analysis estimated that Medicare spending could increase by \$30 billion annually if only 500,000 patients used the drug. Given the high list price and the coverage uncertainty, CMS needed to raise Part B premiums from \$148.50 to \$170.10 to protect the program's solvency.

Since then, Aduhelm's manufacturer, Biogen, lowered the list price from \$56,000 to \$28,200 per year – a 50% decrease. CMS recently issued its final coverage determination for Aduhelm, which limits coverage to beneficiaries enrolled in clinical trials. Taken together, these developments mean that Aduhelm will not pose the cost burden on the system that CMS originally projected. In response, Secretary Becerra indicated that CMS would continue to reevaluate the increase and a final determination would be forthcoming.

Millions of older Americans, many of whom rely on fixed incomes and limited savings to cover costs, are already struggling to make ends meet. Especially in these extraordinary times, my constituents cannot bear additional and unnecessary financial burdens related to their monthly health care premiums. Before entering office, President Biden made a commitment to the

American people that he would use all levers of government to expand access and lower the cost of health care – especially for older Americans. This is an opportunity to make good on that promise and provide relief to millions of Americans who need it most.

I recognize the unprecedented nature of the request, but believe it is justified given the unique circumstances. Now that a major reason for the premium increase has been reversed, I urge swift action to provide my constituents on Medicare with relief. Thank you for very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angie Craig". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angie Craig
Member of Congress