



April 19, 2018

The Honorable Bob Casey
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey and Senator Portman:

On behalf of the Medicare Rights Center, I am writing to express support for the *Medicare Beneficiary Opioid Addiction Treatment Act* (S. 2704), which would modify the Medicare Part B program to permit coverage of methadone as an outpatient treatment for addiction.

The Medicare Rights Center is a national, nonprofit organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling and advocacy, educational programs, and public policy initiatives. Our organization provides services and resources to nearly three million people with Medicare, family caregivers, and health care professionals each year.

The opioid epidemic has not spared older adults and individuals with disabilities. According to a June 2016 *JAMA* study, in 2011 approximately 15 percent of Medicare recipients were prescribed an opioid when they were discharged from the hospital and 42 percent were still taking them three months later. Under current Medicare rules, however, methadone is only covered for outpatients for pain management, not for opioid addiction treatment. This is a major bar to necessary treatment for people who rely on Medicare for health insurance. Authorizing Medicare coverage for methadone addiction treatment would greatly help meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities affected by opioid addiction.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to secure enactment of the *Medicare Beneficiary Opioid Addiction Treatment Act* this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Baker".

Joe Baker
President
Medicare Rights Center

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