

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 5, 2014

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 639 G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

We write to express our concern about the problems some Arizonans have encountered when purchasing health insurance plans that use narrow provider networks through the federal exchange.

As you know, individuals in our state and across the country have unknowingly purchased plans with narrower provider networks than they expect, or plans without doctors and other health services reasonably close to their homes, due in part to insufficient information available on the exchange. This creates significant frustration and can cause real harm to individuals attempting to access quality healthcare.

We believe additional steps should be taken to ensure that potential enrollees can easily access the necessary information to make fully informed decisions about their health insurance options. This easily accessible information should include a list of healthcare providers within the plan network and the location of these providers. A recommendation that we strongly encourage is the inclusion of a "pop-up" message that warns a potential enrollee if the selected plan does not have local providers. Additionally, working with insurance providers to develop an easily searchable system that allows customers to view each plan's specific providers or types of services would improve the overall customer experience. Arizonans purchasing a plan through the federal exchange should be able to easily access the information they need to choose the best plan for them.

For those individuals who have inadvertently purchased narrow network plans, we ask that you provide greater operational flexibility through healthcare.gov, and work with insurance providers and appropriate state agencies so that these individuals can smoothly transition to plans that better fit their needs.

We support the benefits of the Affordable Care Act that will increase access to coverage, lower costs and improve care. At the same time, the roll out of the law has been problematic, and we must recognize that reasonable and commonsense fixes need to occur to make this law work for everyone. Taking steps to ensure that customers can easily see what providers are in-network and if these providers are close to home should be one of these commonsense fixes.

We appreciate your dedication to improving our healthcare system, and we look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,


Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress


Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress


Ron Barber
Member of Congress