

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Joins U.S. Sen. Casey to lead colleagues to urge Trump administration to stop health care sabotage

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*“Drastically reducing funding for the Navigator program while encouraging organizations to provide information to consumers on junk plans represents just another effort by the Trump Administration to sabotage the health care system”*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Bob Casey (D-PA) today led their colleagues in urging Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma to restore funding for the Navigator program and halt sabotage attempts to our health care system. The Navigator program funds nonprofit entities and health care organizations to assist consumers in navigating, shopping and enrolling in health insurance coverage.

CMS recently announced that funding for the Navigator program would be slashed by \$26 million. This announcement also encouraged the promotion of “junk plans,” which harm the 133 million Americans with pre-existing conditions, raise costs on older Americans and deny access to critical health care services. It is clear that the Administration’s attempts to sabotage the health care system continue.

***“This year, CMS failed to provide Navigators with timely guidance and information concerning their funding opportunities,”*** wrote the Senators in their letter. ***“In past years, the federal grant process was underway by***

***April. This year's July 10 announcement was delayed for months and clearly aims to undercut the essential role played by Navigators. A total of \$10 million is not sufficient to support the work of those seeking to ensure that more Americans have access to quality, affordable health care. Since 2016, support for the Navigator program has decreased by 84 percent, when funding amounted to \$62.5 million."***

The Senators continued, ***"Drastically reducing funding for the Navigator program while encouraging organizations to provide information to consumers on junk plans represents just another effort by the Trump Administration to sabotage the health care system. These changes will jeopardize affordable, quality coverage for individuals who need it most and contribute to market instability, threatening health care coverage for millions of Americans.***

***"We urge the Administration to reinstate funding for this critical program and to reconsider program changes to ensure Navigator organizations continue to provide comprehensive information about quality health options through the Marketplace that include guaranteed consumer protections."***

The Navigator program, required by federal law, provides outreach, education and assistance to underserved populations, including individuals with limited English proficiency, complex financial circumstances and those eligible for Medicaid. Since 2016, support for the Navigator program has decreased by 84 percent, when funding amounted to \$62.5 million. This year, CMS also delayed the grant announcement for Navigator programs, and Senators Baldwin and Casey led their colleagues in calling for transparency and expediency regarding Navigator program funding.

Senator Baldwin and Senator Casey support restoring investments in enrollment outreach and in-person assistance, which the Trump Administration gutted last year. Both Senators have also cosponsored the *Marketplace Certainty Act*, which would help stabilize the marketplace and expand access to affordable health insurance to more Americans.

In addition to Senators Baldwin and Casey, the letter was signed by Senators Tom Carper (D-DE), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Robert Menendez (D-NJ),

Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Angus King (I-ME), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Christopher Coons (D-DE), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Jon Tester (D-MT), Gary Peters (D-MI), Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR).

The full letter is available [here](#).