

July 24, 1991

Honorable Daniel Moynihan
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Moynihan,

As a psychiatrist with more than 40 years of professional experience, I am writing with regard to the progressive deterioration in medical care in our nation. The effects of the Great Society legislation on medical care have not been salutary, and the present considerations by HCFA of RBRVS fee schedules for Medicare for psychiatry will make matters considerably worse.

The proposed guidelines provide inadequate payment for practitioners for all psychiatric services to the elderly. Because these guidelines will become the standard for all insurers, the impact on psychiatric care throughout the nation will be negative.

Psychiatrists have been among the less paid members of our profession, and instead of improving the availability of psychiatric treatment, the proposed regulations will make care even more limited than it is.

Are you aware that various psychiatric treatments are not available in our State for the patients of the Office of Mental Health? For example, convulsive therapy is an effective and safe therapy (see NIH Consensus Conference report, 1985) which is available only in academic and private hospitals and the few academic affiliated hospitals of OMH. Under the present regulations, this effective treatment will be even less available.

I urge you to vote to eliminate the 50% copayment for psychiatric services, and to improve the proposed MFS for psychiatric treatment.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry