

## OPINION



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**Medicare cut**

As a front-line caregiver at Plaza West Regional Health Center, which is home to 133 seniors in need of around-the-clock care, I want to thank Rep. Lynn Jenkins, R-Kan., on behalf of our facility and patients for taking the time to meet with me on my recent trip to Washington, D.C.

The purpose of the trip was to lobby against a pending Medicare regulation that would result in deep cuts to patients' Medicare-financed nursing home care; cause the loss of the very key front-line nursing staff jobs integral to seniors' care; and which can be stopped by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

The Obama administration's own budget projections find that the regulation, scheduled to go into effect later this year, will cut funding by \$1.05 billion next year, \$7.23 billion over five years and \$18 billion over 10 years. It makes no sense on any level.

Skilled nursing jobs like those performed by certified nursing assistants, registered nurses and physical and occupational therapists are instrumental to the delivery of quality care.

A recent study from the American

Health Care Association finds that approximately 210 of these jobs are at risk here in Kansas, while more than 30,000 are at risk nationally.

When meeting with Jenkins, we explained the need for her to sign on to a key bipartisan letter that is now circulating in Congress. The letter urges Sebelius to stop the Medicare regulation from going into effect.

In addition to cutting key jobs and potentially damaging our already fragile economy, moving forward with the proposed Medicare regulation would inhibit continued investment in cost-effective care in settings most appropriate to residents' needs.

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