

Name withheld for privacy.

June 2, 2003

COPY

Congressman Ron Paul
U.S. Congress
203 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Paul:

I am writing to inform you about a structural problem in Medicare of which you may be unaware and that I believe must be remedied, all the more so now that there are rumors that Medicare, Part A, might be combined with Medicare, Part B.

In brief, the problem to which I refer involves the requirement that a Medicare-eligible individual enroll in Medicare, Part A as a condition of receiving Social Security benefits to which he or she is entitled. In fact, the Social Security Administration has combined the enrollment forms for the two programs, so that an application for Social Security benefits to which one is entitled automatically entails enrollment in Medicare, Part A.

I discovered this in June 2001 when I went with my husband to apply for my Social Security benefits. I made it quite clear that I would *not* enroll in Medicare, Part A due to my objections to certain aspects of this program. (The objectionable aspects include invasion of privacy and limitation of medical choice.) In response I was told that I then could not receive the Social Security benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

Further communication with CMS by myself and by the office of Senator Kennedy on my behalf confirmed that CMS and the Social Security Administration take the position that "the Medicare program, Part A...[is] a benefit completely linked to the monthly social security benefit for those age 65 or older..." Indeed I was sent a copy of federal regulation 404.640 (entitled "Withdrawal of an application"), which states that anyone who enrolls in Medicare, Part A and then decides later to withdraw will have to return all benefits received. (Another document I received states that this includes both medical benefits and social security benefits.)

Upon receipt of a copy of the letter, dated October 12, 2001, sent to Senator Kennedy regarding my complaint, I followed that letter's suggestion that I make an attempt to file "a restricted application for Social Security benefits." This I did in a letter, dated May 15, 2002, to the regional commissioner for Social Security, Manual Vaz.

