

## Letters

### Concern about possible 'critical access' designation

**SUSANNE PINKHAM**, *Taos*

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Holy Cross Hospital may choose to become a "critical access" hospital, as last week's *Taos News* article details.

Full disclosure of what that designation will mean to the Medicare enrolled community members in Taos was under-reported in the article. The citizens who supported the hospital by voting to increase their taxes with the mill levy earlier this year expect more detailed information from news reporters and hospital officials about changes in how the hospital operates.

Some web surfing on sites that offer information about critical access hospitals reveals that Medicare patients have between two-to-six times more out-of pocket charges in critical access hospitals in comparison to acute care hospitals. The difference in what a hospital bills and what Medicare will reimburse can be very big — having to pay 20 percent of what is billed can create enormous financial burdens for Medicare beneficiaries without supplemental insurance.

Any outpatient procedures done at Holy Cross, as well as inpatient care, would be subject to these additional out-of-pocket charges for individuals enrolled in Medicare.

Tell us what the hospital charges for a CT scan, an echocardiogram, a rotator cuff repair, or an ER visit to sew up a laceration, and then explain what Medicare reimburses so we can see the difference.

Taos wants and needs a hospital, but do we want the burden of keeping a hospital open to fall on the backs of the least affluent senior citizens?

**SUSANNE PINKHAM**

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