



Home Health Care Planning

Action Requested: Cosponsor S. 296 / H.R. 2150, the Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act.

This legislation authorizes PAs, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse midwives (qualified providers) to order and manage home health care for Medicare patients. The legislation will improve access to home health services and promote continuity of care for Medicare beneficiaries, particularly patients living in rural and other medically underserved communities. Additionally, authorizing PAs and other qualified providers to conduct the required face-to-face initial home health visit promises greater efficiency and reduced costs for both patients and Medicare.

Background: Currently, PAs and other qualified providers are not recognized within the Medicare program as being authorized to order or manage home health services for their patients. This disrupts continuity of care for patients that rely on PAs for their care and decreases the availability of care for seniors and the disabled, especially in medically underserved communities where PAs may be the only health care provider.

While Congress has acted over the years to ensure services provided by PAs, as authorized by state law, are covered by Medicare, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has maintained that a statutory change in Medicare law pertaining to home health is necessary for PAs to order and manage home health benefits for seniors and the disabled. Decades of data support the ability of PAs to provide high quality care to people of all ages, including Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions. PAs may be the only providers available in medically underserved rural and urban regions.

Enactment of the Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act would ensure PAs can order home health services for Medicare patients in a manner consistent with state law. It is well within the education and training of PAs to order and manage home health services.

AAPA Legislative Recommendation: AAPA urges Congress to support and pass the Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act of 2019 (S. 296 / H.R. 2150) introduced in the 116th Congress by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Representatives Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Earl “Buddy” Carter (R-GA).

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