

December 07, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and House Minority Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the millions of Medicare patients across the country, the undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for the Preserving Access to Home Health Act of 2022 (H.R. 8581/S. 4605).

In the CY 2023 Home Health Payment System (HHPPS) Final Rule, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized a permanent 7.85 percent payment cut to Medicare home health services, as well as clawback cuts totaling \$2 billion beginning in 2024 for services already provided during the first two years of the pandemic, with the potential for additional cuts in subsequent years. These cuts are even higher than what CMS originally proposed earlier this year, which independent analysts estimated would slash \$18 billion in payments to the home health sector over the next ten years. Though CMS decided to phase in the permanent cut in 2023 by instituting a 3.925% payment reduction for next year, the total financial impacts are likely to be even more severe in the decade ahead. Ultimately, these cuts pose a grave threat to the health and safety of the more than 3 million Medicare beneficiaries who utilize home health services each year.

Data suggest these cuts put nearly half of American home health agencies at risk of closure. Without access to home health, particularly in rural and underserved communities across the nation, patients will have no choice but to seek post-acute and rehabilitative care in more expensive institutional settings.

Legislation, introduced by Reps. Terri Sewell (D-AL) and Vern Buchanan (R-FL) in the House and Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Susan Collins (R-ME) in the Senate, would prevent CMS from imposing the 7.85 percent payment cut to home health services until 2026 and block the \$2 billion clawback cut from going into effect, giving Medicare's home health community time to recover from the financial pressures of the pandemic and provide continued access to care for patients. We understand that this legislation is being modified in order to ready it for inclusion in an end-of-year legislative package.

We remain concerned that without swift action, patient access to care and stability for home health providers will be at risk. Medicare home health services are utilized by some of the

nation's most vulnerable patients, with nearly half having five or more chronic health conditions and a quarter being over the age of 85. Home health is an overwhelmingly popular option for America's seniors, with over 90 percent of older Americans and Medicare beneficiaries recently telling researchers at Morning Consult that their highest preference for receiving short-term recovery or rehabilitation health care at home. The patients we represent deserve the choice of receiving short-term recovery and rehabilitation care in the comfort of their own homes, where they are safer and can be surrounded by loved ones.

Thank you for considering our perspective, and we urge you to swiftly pass this popular, bipartisan legislation to protect older Americans and individuals with disabilities' access to Medicare home health services.

Sincerely,

AliveAndKickn

Avery's Hope

Cactus Cancer

Cervivor, Inc.

Colon Cancer Coalition

Center for Medicine in the Public Interest

Foundation for Childhood Pancreatitis

Game of Crohn's N' Chronic Illness

International Foundation for AiArthritis

Looms4Lupus

Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.

ONE CANCER PLACE, Inc.

People with Empathy

Patients Rising Now

RetireSafe

Say YES to Hope

Support Fibromyalgia Network

The Steffens Scleroderma Foundation