

Support Access to Inpatient Hospital Services

Cosponsor H.R. 4663, the Protect Patient Access and Promote Hospital Efficiency Act

Dear Colleague:

Last year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a rule that changed previous policy to now require all inpatient hospital services to be certified by a physician. This includes an admission order for hospital services signed by a certified nurse-midwife (CNM), nurse practitioner (NP), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), or physician assistant (PA), even if the health care professional already has the authority to admit a patient under state law and under hospital bylaws. More importantly, this new rule is a direct deviation from previous Medicare policy that permitted these health care professionals to admit patients in need of timely care.

Unfortunately, the new rule diminishes patient access and promotes hospital inefficiency and must be changed. This policy fails to take into account the role CNMs, NPs, CNSs, and PAs play in our health care system today.

Currently, all but one state allows midwives to obtain admitting privileges for hospital services. Twenty-five states allow midwives to practice entirely without a requirement that their work be supervised, or undertaken in collaboration with a physician. Likewise, NPs, CNSs, and PAs (who also admit patients) are not prohibited from admitting patients to hospitals where admitting privileges have been conferred.

Compounding this problem is the fact that hospitals often apply Medicare policy across the board with all patients, regardless of payer, to include Medicaid and private health insurance. Furthermore, patients requiring admission by nurse practitioners—*particularly in shortage areas*—would lack access if a physician must certify every admission to a hospital.

That is why we have introduced **H.R. 4663, the “Protect Patient Access and Promote Hospital Efficiency Act.”** This *bipartisan* bill would ensure beneficiaries, who are patients of a CNM, NP, CNS, or PA, have timely access to inpatient hospital services. Further, in doing so, the Protect Patient Access and Promote Hospital Efficiency Act would eliminate this new unnecessary burden on physicians to certify services for Medicare beneficiaries who are not their patients.

We urge you to cosponsor this common sense legislation to provide relief for hospitals from the consequences of this policy and ensure that all patients have access to the care they need. To cosponsor, please contact Ellen Cain in Rep. Black’s office at Ellen.Cain@mail.house.gov, or Waverly Gordon in Rep. Schakowsky’s office at Waverly.Gordon@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Diane Black (R-TN)
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
Member of Congress