

ACNM's Push for CM Language in Senate Medicare Bill

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What has transpired so far:

On August 1st, 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the CHAMP Act (H.R. 3162) addressing access to health coverage for children and Medicare provisions. Sec. 603 of this bill will provide for equitable reimbursement for certified nurse-midwives. It raises the reimbursement level from 65% of the fee schedule to 100% of what physicians receive. Unfortunately, CM language was not included in this bill.

Why was it not included?

It is unclear why Rep. Rangel (D-NY) did not include this provision in the bill, as our federal lobbyist had recently met with his staffer and explained the importance of this provision to the citizens of New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island. We do not believe there is strong opposition to this inclusion from the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Health or from the House Ways and Means Committee, although we do know that several members from these key committees did not cosponsor H.R. 864 because of the CM provision.

What is our plan of action?

Currently, the CM provision is included in S. 507, which we are lobbying hard to have attached to a Senate Medicare bill. We expect a Senate Medicare bill to be introduced this Fall. Without support from New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island Senators, the CM provision doesn't stand much of a chance. Therefore, ACNM members from NY, NJ and RI need to lobby their Senators ASAP to ask them to cosponsor this bill so that it will have the best chance possible to be included in the final bill. At the conclusion of a conference between the House and Senate, the final legislation will be sent to the President for his signature.

Therefore, it is imperative that the 6 Senators from NY, NJ and RI advocate for the CM provision, ideally as cosponsors, with the Senate Finance Committee, specifically Senator Baucus (D-MT). It will be difficult for Senator Conrad (D-ND), the lead sponsor of S. 507, to advocate for the CM provision in the Senate unless these six Senators express their support for the bill.

How can you get involved?

1. August is ACNM's National Midwifery Advocacy Month. Go to <http://www.midwife.org/legislative.cfm?id=949> to learn more about steps to take to meet with your Senators or their staff locally, as they are on August recess and most likely in their home states. You can still meet with local

- staff during the month of September as well, but most likely will not be able to meet with the Senators directly.
2. If you do not have time to meet with your Senators or their staff, call their DC office (contact names and phone numbers listed below) and ask the Senators to cosponsor S. 507. Click here <http://www.acnm.org/legislative.cfm?id=1090> to learn more about the bill, including the latest talking points, a copy of the ACOG support letter, a sample email letter, and other helpful documents.
 3. Still need some help? Contact Heather Bradford, CNM, ARNP, Chair of Government Affairs Committee (hbradford@comcast.net).

New York:

1. Senator Hillary Clinton - Andrea Palm, Legislative Aide in DC.
Andrea_palm@clinton.senate.gov, (202) 224-4451
2. Senator Charles Schumer – Heather Langdon, Legislative Aide in DC
Heather_Langdon@schumer.senate.gov, (202) 224-6542

New Jersey:

1. Senator Frank Lautenberg – Apryl Clark, Legislative Aide in DC
apryl_clark@lautenberg.senate.gov (202) 224-3224
2. Senator Robert Menendez – Emma Palmer, Legislative Aide in DC
emma_palmer@menendez.senate.gov, (202) 224-4744

Rhode Island:

1. Senator Jack Reed – Topher Spiro, Legislative Aide in DC.
Topher_spiro@Reed.senate.gov, (202) 224-4642
2. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse – Jordanna Levinson, Legislative Aide in DC
jordanna_levinson@whitehouse.senate.gov, (202) 224-2921