

Aug. 1, 2022

**ACTION REQUESTED:** IHA urges hospital leaders to meet with federal lawmakers during the month of August to provide an overview of your organization's financial picture and urge support for hospital priorities to be included in "must-pass" legislation this fall. Members of Congress will be in their districts and states during the month of August, providing a good opportunity to invite them to visit your organization and highlight how the current inflationary economy and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic are causing extreme financial strain and impacting access to patient and community care.

**BACKGROUND:** Congress will consider several pieces of "must-pass" legislation when it returns for the fall work period. IHA is working with our national partner, the American Hospital Association (AHA) to attach critical hospital and health system priorities and to prevent cuts to hospitals from being included. Please ask your lawmakers to support the following action: when Congress returns to in September:

- Reverse 2% Medicare sequester cuts, which were fully reinstated in July. Fully implemented, these cuts result in reduced payments of approximately \$160 million annually to Illinois hospitals.
- Prevent 4% PAYGO cuts, which take effect on Jan. 1, 2023, unless Congress acts. Hospitals face a 4% additional cut to their Medicare payments, risking further destabilization to our already strained healthcare system.
- Oppose site-neutral payment policies, which reimburse the same amount for services regardless of care setting, thereby failing to account for higher costs hospitals incur to provide 24/7 access to care, serve as the safety net provider for vulnerable patients, and comply with more comprehensive licensing, accreditation and regulatory requirements.
- Permanently extend telehealth flexibilities. IHA appreciates that Congress extended telehealth flexibilities for 151 days following the end of the public health emergency, and we ask Congress to make these flexibilities permanent.
- Extend the hospital-at-home program by passing the *Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act* (S. 3792/H.R. 7053).
- Extend the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program, which supports rural hospitals that are more dependent on Medicare revenue.
- Extend the enhanced low-volume adjustment (LVA) policy, which supports hospitals with fewer than 3,800 Medicare discharges.
- Extend the Conrad State 30 Program by passing the *Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Act* (S. 1810/H.R. 3541), introduced by Rep. Brad Schneider (IL-10).
- Lift the cap on Medicare-supported physician residency positions by passing the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act* (S. 834/H.R. 2256) and the *Opioid Workforce Act/Substance Use Disorder Workforce Act* (S. 1438/H.R. 3441), introduced by Rep. Schneider.
- Streamline the visa process to allow nurses and physicians to support pandemic response by passing the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* (S. 1024/H.R. 2255), introduced by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Rep. Schneider.
- Reduce unnecessary burden on clinicians and other healthcare workers by passing the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access*

to *Care Act* (S. 3018/H.R. 3173) to streamline the prior authorization process in Medicare Advantage plans.

- Restore funding to nursing and allied health programs by passing the *TRAIN Act* (S. 1568/H.R. 4407), introduced by Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Rep. Darin LaHood (R-IL).
- Increase funding for the National Health Service Corps program by passing the *Strengthening America's Health Care Readiness Act* (S. 54), introduced by Sen. Durbin, and the Rural America Health Corps Act (S. 924/H.R. 2130), introduced by Sen. Durbin and Rep. Cheri Bustos (IL-17).
- Increase funding for the Children's Hospital GME program to support federal investment in physician training for children.

[Click here](#) for talking points/key messages.

- IHA resource: [2023 Illinois Congressional Districts](#)
- Kauffman Hall [National Hospital Flash Report](#) (June 28)
- AHA fact sheet: [AHA urges Congress to call on CMS to stop cuts to hospitals](#)
- AHA fact sheet: [Strengthening the healthcare workforce](#)
- AHA fact sheet: [Majority of hospital payments dependent on Medicare or Medicaid](#)

[Click here](#) to send a message to your member of Congress. [Click here](#) to access a customizable template email which is available for your use, and IHA's recent letter to the delegation is [here](#).

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