

Jennifer_Claypool@allard.senate.gov

LEGISLATIVE FREEZE & REGULATORY CUTS TO DECREASE HOME HEALTH CARE FUNDING IN COLORADO BY \$65 MILLION!

TO: Senator Wayne Allard
c/o Jennifer Claypool

First I want to thank Senator Allard for his continuing strong support of home health and hospice over the years that he has so admirably represented Colorado in the U.S. Senate.

Secondly, Jennifer, it seems like every year at this time, I come a begging! But I have some new information that I have not had before this time and hope that you will pass it on to him...

The National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC) has just finished putting together some impact data on home care as it relates to the recently passed house bill, H.R. 3162.

H.R. 3162 provides a one-year reduction in Medicare home health payment rates through a freeze in the market basket update for FY 2008; it also provides a 5% rural add-on payment for two years.

The Home Care Association of Colorado is asking Congress to:

- 1) reject the home health market basket freeze included in H.R. 3162; and**
- 2) urge CMS Acting Administrator Herb Kuhn to eliminate the proposed home health case-mix creep adjustment as part of the final home health prospective payment (HHPPS) regulation.**

Statewide, over five years, Colorado stands to lose \$64,858,080 (\$21,730,800 from the freeze in the home health market basket inflation update plus \$43,127,280 from the Case Mix Weight adjustment).

By 2010, 56.4% of rural agencies in Colorado will have Medicare margins below zero if these measures are implemented; 20.0% of urban agencies will have negative Medicare margins.

We sincerely request that Sen. Allard again sign a Senate letter urging the authorizing committees to not cut payments to home care. Please contact Priscilla Hanley in Sen. Collins' office at 4-2512 for details. --- (Dear Colleague letter attached).

We are also requesting that Sen. Allard write to the CMS Acting Director Herb Kuhn and urge CMS to eliminate the proposed home health case-mix creep adjustment. The Lewin Group (study attached) found that CMS assertions of case mix creep were unfounded. In fact, the CMS proposed case mix weight adjustment ignores increases in patient acuity, particularly a significant increase in orthopedic and neurologically impaired patients

requiring rehabilitative therapy. These changes in patient characteristics are documented by the Lewin Group and directly correlate with changes in case mix weights of patients in home care.

We are sending you several attachments including:

- 1) A fact sheet that describes the issues (legislative and regulatory cuts to home care);
- 2) Dollar Impact for State and congressional district;
- 3) Percent of home health agencies with negative margins (if the legislative and regulatory cuts are implemented); and
- 4) The Senate Dear Colleague sign on letter.

IMPACT DATA National, State, and District:

National: Nationally, the projected loss from the freeze is \$2.6 billion over five years (2008-2010); \$5.6 billion over the same five-year period for the case mix creep adjustment. H.R.3162 does contain a two year 5% rural add-on (cost to the government for doing this is \$300 million). Obviously, \$300 million is not enough to offset the huge losses that home care will suffer through the imposition of the freeze (legislative cut) and the case mix weight adjustment (regulatory freeze).

State: The projected impact on Colorado if the home health legislative (freeze) and regulatory cuts (case mix weight adjustment) were implemented would be -- Over five years, CO could lose \$64,858,080, (\$21,730,800 from the freeze in the home health market basket inflation update plus \$43,127,280 from the Case Mix Weight adjustment).

Percent of Home Health Agencies with Negative Medicare Margins in 2008, 2009 and 2010--

We have attached NAHCs latest analysis of the percent of home health agencies that will have margins below zero, if the freeze in the House bill (HR 3162) and the CMS case mix weight adjustment or regulatory cut is implemented. The analysis assumes that these measures would be pared with the two-year extension of the 5% rural-add on that is in the House bill. **By 2010, 56.4% of rural agencies in Colorado will have Medicare margins below zero if these measures are implemented; 20.0% of urban agencies will have negative Medicare margins.**

Please feel free to call me and let me know if you have any questions. We do hope that Sen. Allard will sign the Senate letter to support no cuts to home care.

Sincerely,

Ellen Caruso
Executive Director
Home Care Association of Colorado
303-694-4728 EXT 12

[Impact Data. Percent of HHA with Negative Margins 080907.pdf](#)

[Fact Sheet. OpposeCuts to Medicare HH Services 080907.Aug.rec.pdf](#)

[Colorado ALL.xls](#)

[07 The Lewin Group HHPPS Analysis.pdf](#)