

Please Support the Protecting Access to Ground Ambulance Medical Services Act of 2023

Request

Please support H.R. 1666, the Protecting Access to Ground Ambulance Medical Services Act of 2023, sponsored by Representative Brad Wenstrup (R-OH) and Representative Terry Sewell (D-AL). This legislation would extend temporary additional reimbursement for ground ambulance services until the Medicare ambulance fee schedule is reformed. Without the extension of these ground ambulance “add-ons,” many ambulance service organizations will not be able to continue serving their communities.

Background

Congress originally extended the current Medicare add-on payments through December 31, 2022, when the review of the Medicare cost data collection survey and subsequent MedPAC analysis was expected to be complete. However, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) delayed the first two rounds of data collection because of the pandemic. As part of the FY2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, Congress extended the add-on payments until December 31, 2024. We ask for an additional three years, through December 31, 2027, to allow the cost collection data to be collected and analyzed so that a long-term solution to the chronic underfunding of the ambulance fee schedule can be adopted.

H.R. 1666 would extend the current add-on payments of 2% urban, 3% rural, and 22.6% in “super rural” areas. Years of below-cost Medicare reimbursement have hampered efforts by ambulance services to hire new staff, update equipment, and continue to provide life-saving services in their communities. Ambulance services have closed or been forced to lengthen response times because of the stresses on their systems. Congress must extend and even increase the percentages of these additional payments in order to help preserve access to critical 9-1-1 emergency and urgent interfacility ground ambulance services.

To learn more about H.R. 1666 or to cosponsor the bill, please contact Kelsi Wilson with Representative Wenstrup’s office at kelsi.wilson@mail.house.gov or Cameryn Blackmore with Representative Sewell’s office at cameryn.blackmore@mail.house.gov.

To learn more about the draft legislation in the Senate, please contact Christina McCauley with Senator Cortez Masto’s office at christina_mccauley@cortezmasto.senate.gov or Maria Olson with Senator Collins’ office at maria_olson@collins.senate.gov.