

## CONNECT FOR HEALTH ACT

### ACTION

Tell your members of Congress to cosponsor the CONNECT for Health Act of 2017 (S. 1016/H.R. 2556). This legislation would allow Medicare beneficiaries access to services (e.g., audiology and speech-language pathology) that they may not otherwise receive via telehealth.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The **CONNECT for Health Act of 2017** would:

- lift restrictions on the use of telehealth in Accountable Care Organizations and Medicare Advantage, including provider restrictions;
- expand originating sites for telehealth care;
- create a Medicare Remote Patient Monitoring benefit for certain high-risk, high-cost patients;
- urge the Secretary of Health and Human Services to evaluate the applicability of telehealth in projects before the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI); and
- authorize a study on the effectiveness of telehealth services once restrictions have been lifted.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO SAY?

- Explain what services can be done via telehealth by an audiologist or speech-language pathologist. Tell stories of your own experiences in detail and why you think telehealth services are important.
- Medicare reimbursement for telehealth services performed by audiologists and speech-language pathologists will improve access to care for Medicare beneficiaries and can save costs through reducing unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital readmissions.
- Telehealth expands Medicare beneficiaries' access to audiology and speech-language pathology services and can alleviate provider shortages by extending clinical services to remote and rural locations as well as underserved populations.
- The cost associated with the legislation would have a nominal effect on the overall spending for Medicare. An independent cost estimate found that covering audiology and speech-language pathology services under Medicare would increase fiscal year outlays by less than \$2.5 million over the 5-year budget period and less than \$10 million over 10-years.

#### ASHA CONTACT:

Sam Hewitt, Director of Congressional Advocacy  
202-624-5961 • [shewitt@asha.org](mailto:shewitt@asha.org)  
[takeaction.asha.org](http://takeaction.asha.org)