

MEDICARE TELEHEALTH PARITY ACT

ACTION

Tell your members of Congress to support the Medicare Telehealth Parity Act of 2017 (H.R. 2550), which identifies audiologists and speech-language pathologists as appropriate providers of telehealth services and authorizes Medicare to reimburse them for providing patients with much-needed care.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The **Medicare Telehealth Parity Act of 2017** would phase in the expansion of telehealth services by:

- expanding the list of eligible providers and related covered services to include audiologists, speech-language pathologists, respiratory therapists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists;
- removing the geographic barriers under current law and allowing for the provision of telehealth services in rural, underserved, and metropolitan areas;
- expanding access to telestroke services, regardless of where the patient is located;
- allowing remote patient monitoring (RPM) for patients with chronic conditions such as heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and diabetes; and
- allowing the beneficiary's home to serve as a site of care for home dialysis, hospice care, eligible outpatient mental health services, and home health services.

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.

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