

## CONNECT for Health Act (S. 2484/H.R. 4442)

*Introduced by Senators Schatz, Wicker, Cochran, Cardin, Thune, and Warner  
and Representatives Black, Welch, Harper, and Thompson*

### Promoting cost savings & quality care in Medicare through telehealth and remote patient monitoring

- The CONNECT for Health Act would **expand the use of telehealth and remote patient monitoring services in Medicare**, toward the goal of cost savings and quality care.
- Telehealth is the use of telecommunications technologies to deliver health care, health information, or health education at a distance. Clinical uses include video conferencing, remote patient monitoring (RPM) services (use of telecommunications tools to monitor high-risk patients at home), and store-and-forward technologies (asynchronous transfer of medical data for analysis and care).
- Numerous studies on telehealth and RPM have shown benefits in quality care and cost savings.<sup>1</sup>
- Provisions in current statute (42 U.S.C. 1834(m)) constrain telehealth reimbursement by:
  - **Originating site restrictions** – the patient may only be located at certain clinical sites;
  - **Geographic limitations** – the patient may only be located in certain rural areas;
  - **Restrictions on store-and-forward technologies** – only permitted in Alaska and Hawaii;
  - **Limitations on distant site providers** – only Medicare-defined “physicians” and “practitioners” may provide telehealth services, but not, for example, physical or occupational therapists; and
  - **Limitations on covered codes** –CMS must define reimbursable telehealth codes.

### CONNECT for Health Act solutions

- The CONNECT for Health Act would:
  - Create a **bridge program** to help providers transition to the goals of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) and the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) through using telehealth and RPM without most of the aforementioned 1834(m) restrictions;
  - Allow telehealth and RPM to be used by qualifying participants in **alternative payment models**, without most of the aforementioned 1834(m) restrictions;
  - Permit the use of **remote patient monitoring** for certain patients with chronic conditions;
  - Allow, as originating sites, **telestroke evaluation and management sites; Native American health service facilities; and dialysis facilities** for home dialysis patients in certain cases;
  - Permit further telehealth and RPM in **community health centers and rural health clinics**;
  - Allow telehealth and RPM to be **basic benefits in Medicare Advantage**, without most of the aforementioned 1834(m) restrictions; and
  - Clarify that the provision of telehealth or RPM technologies made under Medicare by a health care provider for the purpose of furnishing these services shall not be considered “remuneration.”

### Potential for cost savings

- The bill includes requirements regarding cost containment, quality measures, and data collection.
- An Avalere analysis<sup>2</sup> of three of the major provisions of the bill (first three bullets above) showed **\$1.8 billion in savings over 10 years**.

*Endorsements noted on back. Please contact Aimee Grace (aimee\_grace@schatz.senate.gov) for questions.*

<sup>1</sup> <http://cchpca.org/research-catalogues>

<sup>2</sup> Avalere Health. Estimated Federal Impact of Proposed Policy Changes to Expand Medicare Reimbursement of Telehealth and Remote Patient Monitoring. January 11, 2016.

## Endorsements

1. AARP
2. ACT | The App Association
3. Airstrip
4. Alliance for Aging Research
5. Alliance for Connected Care
6. Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP)
7. Alliance for Home Dialysis
8. Alzheimer's Foundation of America
9. America's Essential Hospitals (AEH)
10. America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)
11. American Academy of Neurology (AAN)
12. American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)
13. American Academy of Sleep Medicine
14. American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE)
15. American College of Physicians
16. American College of Preventive Medicine
17. American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association (AHA)
18. American Medical Association (AMA)
19. American Medical Group Association (AMGA)
20. American Nurses Association (ANA)
21. American Occupational Therapy Association
22. American Osteopathic Association (AOA)
23. American Psychiatric Association
24. American Psychological Association
25. American Society of Nephrology (ASN)
26. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
27. American Telemedicine Association (ATA)
28. American Well
29. Anthem
30. Ascension Health
31. Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
32. Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW)
33. Association for Community Affiliated Plans
34. Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
35. Atrius Health
36. BlueCross BlueShield Association
37. CAPG
38. Cerner
39. DaVita
40. Federation of American Hospitals
41. Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB)
42. Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA)
43. Health Care Chaplaincy Network
44. Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC)
45. Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
46. Intel
47. Jefferson Medical College
48. Kaiser Permanente
49. LifeWIRE
50. Medical Group Management Association
51. Medical Society of Northern Virginia
52. NAADAC
53. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
54. National Association for Home Care & Hospice
55. National Association for the Support of Long Term Care (NASL)
56. National Association of ACOs (NAACOS)
57. National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC)
58. National Association of Rural Health Clinics
59. National Coalition on Health Care
60. National Committee for Quality Assurance
61. National Council for Behavioral Health
62. National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)
63. National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved
64. National Register of Health Service Psychologists
65. National Rural Health Association
66. National Stroke Association
67. Personal Connected Health Alliance (PCHA)
68. Population Health Alliance
69. Prevail Health
70. Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association
71. Qualcomm Incorporated (& Qualcomm Life)
72. Renal Physicians Association
73. Saturn Care
74. SCAN Health Plan
75. Society for Adolescent Health & Medicine
76. Telecommunications Industry Association
77. The ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC)
78. The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society
79. The Jewish Federations of North America
80. Third Way
81. United Spinal Association
82. University of Hawaii Cancer Center
83. University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine
84. University of Mississippi Medical Center Center for Telehealth
85. University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
86. University of Virginia (UVA) Center for Telehealth