

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.¹
- 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 analysis² 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.

Endorsements

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

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

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