

WellLink Supports Bill to Ensure Fair, Timely Provider Payments and Improve Patient Access

WellLink Health Alliance commends U.S. Representatives Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, and Greg Murphy, MD (R-NC), Health Subcommittee member, for introducing bipartisan legislation to require Medicare Advantage (MA) to adequately reimburse healthcare providers for services offered to enrollees of these private plans.

The Prompt and Fair Pay Act (H.R. 4559) takes critical steps to ensure that providers in Northeast Ohio and beyond are paid in a timely and appropriate manner for the care they deliver to Medicare Advantage patients. For too long, payment policies for in-network providers have lagged behind those for out-of-network providers, creating unnecessary administrative hurdles. This legislation closes that gap by holding insurers accountable, helping ensure Medicare beneficiaries in our region have timely access to covered care.

Under this bill, existing prompt payment and rate equity standards, currently applied only to out-of-network providers, would also apply to in-network providers. Without these standards, hospitals and health systems across Northeast Ohio face confusing double standards, excessive claim denials, and costly administrative battles to secure payment for services already rendered. A national survey found that while nearly 70% of denied claims are ultimately overturned, hospitals spend billions of dollars each year navigating these disputes — time and resources that could instead be directed toward patient care.

(<https://tinyurl.com/PriorAuthSurvey>)

These delays have real consequences for patients in our communities. When payments are denied or delayed, patients may postpone or skip necessary follow-up care due to financial uncertainty. This can lead to poorer health outcomes and greater long-term costs.

According to The Commonwealth Fund, 33% of Americans report skipping or delaying necessary follow-up care because they worry about the costs. Patients whose bills are unpaid by their insurer may be liable for some or all of the ultimate costs of care, and a lengthy wait for coverage approval may result in patients delaying necessary follow-up care.

WellLink Health Alliance supports removing these friction points in the healthcare system. By easing administrative burdens and streamlining the payment process, the Prompt and Fair Pay Act will allow Northeast Ohio providers to devote more time and resources to what matters most — delivering high-quality, timely care to patients.