



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Rep. Kind Introduces Legislation to Protect Critical Access Hospitals

Washington, DC – To protect the large number of Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) in western Wisconsin, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) has introduced *The Rural Health Services Preservation Act of 2007* (H.R. 2159), which would ensure CAHs are reimbursed at the same rate for treating all Medicare beneficiaries, including those enrolled in private Medicare Advantage (MA) plans. The bill is cosponsored by U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA).

“There are 58 Critical Access Hospitals in Wisconsin, 23 of them in western Wisconsin,” said Rep. Kind, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee member, which has jurisdiction over Medicare. “They represent the backbone of the health care safety net in rural communities in our state and across the country. From life-threatening emergencies to preventive care, they are often the sole health care provider to rural residents. We must ensure that they can continue to provide these vital services, and this bill will prevent Critical Access Hospitals from being short-changed by Medicare Advantage plans.”

Nine million Medicare beneficiaries receive medical care from rural providers such as CAHs. To account for the unique challenges these facilities face as rural providers, CAHs are paid differently than are other hospitals under traditional Medicare plans. Congress decided to reimburse CAHs at 101 percent of the cost to provide inpatient, outpatient, laboratory, and therapy services.

Although this CAH reimbursement system was enacted by Congress to preserve access to hospital services for our rural seniors, many CAHs do not receive payments at these levels today for providing care to beneficiaries enrolled in the Medicare Advantage (MA) program. H.R. 2159 would ensure that CAHs are reimbursed at the same levels by private Medicare Advantage plans as they receive under the traditional Medicare program for inpatient, swing-bed, and outpatient hospital services.

“Critical Access Hospitals play an important role in providing quality, local care to rural communities – so that rural residents do not have to travel to urban areas to receive high-quality care,” said Steve Brenton, President and CEO of the Wisconsin Hospital Association. “This bill will help Critical Access Hospitals maintain their level of quality, and I want to thank Rep. Kind for his leadership on this issue.”

“Rural hospitals have a higher percentage of Medicare patients in their practices and these hospitals will be unable to continue to provide access to health care if they do not receive cost-based reimbursement,” said Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, the bill’s Republican cosponsor. “I appreciate the great service of MA plans in rural America and want make sure that providers can cover the costs of serving seniors.”

Critical Access Hospitals in the Third Congressional District

Osseo Medical Center	Osseo
St. Joseph's Community Health Service, Inc	Hillsboro
Franciscan Skemp Health Care-Sparta Campus	Sparta
Franciscan Skemp Health Care-Arcadia Campus	Arcadia
Chippewa Valley Hospital	Durand
Memorial Hospital Lafayette County	Darlington
Tri County Memorial Hospital	Whitehall
Tomah Memorial Hospital	Tomah
Grant Regional Health Center	Lancaster
Memorial Medical Center	Neillsville
Prairie Du Chien Memorial Hospital	Prairie Du Chien
Black River Memorial Hospital	Black River Falls
Hudson Hospital	Hudson
Myrtle Werth Hospital	Menomonie
Richland Hospital, Inc.	Richland Center
Boscobel Area Health Care	Boscobel
Holy Family Hospital	New Richmond
Baldwin Area Medical Center	Baldwin
Vernon Memorial Hospital	Viroqua
River Falls Area Hospital	River Falls
Reedsburg Area Medical Center	Reedsburg
Upland Hills Health	Dodgeville
Southwest Health Center Inc.	Platteville