



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Rep. Kind: Prescription for a Healthy Wisconsin

CHAMP Act: Defends Rural Health Care

Second in a Series on the Children's Health & Medicare Protection Act of 2007

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, today highlighted provisions in the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act that work to maintain our commitment to rural health care. The CHAMP Act was passed out of the Ways and Means Committee last week, and is expected to come to the House floor later this week.

"Seniors living in western Wisconsin and in rural communities across the country deserve the same access to quality health care services that urban areas provide," Rep. Kind said. "The CHAMP Act protects our rural health care safety net, ensuring that seniors can continue to see the doctor of their choice, and providers can continue to meet the unique challenges of serving a rural area."

The CHAMP Act includes a \$3 billion rural package that sustains the rural health care safety net, extending for two years important add-on payments for hospitals, doctors and other rural providers who care for Medicare beneficiaries. Without Congressional action, these provisions are set to expire, which would leave rural providers facing Medicare payment cuts. The CHAMP Act ensures that seniors living in rural areas will have access to the health care they deserve.

The CHAMP Act key rural provisions include:

- Ensuring that rural doctors are paid the same rate for their work as their urban counterparts, which helps rural physicians keep their doors open to seniors by preserving payment equity.
- Providing bonuses to encourage and reward doctors that practice in areas where there is a shortage of physicians through a five percent incentive payment to help recruit and retain physicians where they are needed most.
- Helping certain rural hospitals cover their lab costs, which are higher than urban hospitals because of the lower patient volume.
- Protecting access to rural home health agencies and ambulances by providing additional reimbursement to cover the greater distances rural providers must travel.

The CHAMP Act has been endorsed by the National Rural Health Association.