

Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act (S.3792/H.R.7053)

The Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act would establish a two-year extension of the Acute Hospital Care at Home COVID-19 waiver triggered by the end of the public health emergency (PHE). The legislation will also require the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct an evaluation of the program and issue regulation establishing health and safety requirements.

What is the Acute Hospital Care at Home Waiver? In November 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver, which permitted treatment for many common acute conditions, such as asthma, pneumonia, and COPD, in-home settings. Because of the waiver, many Medicare beneficiaries needing acute-level care, and their caregivers, have been able to receive services at home during the pandemic. The program has been extremely popular, and as of March 17, 2022, there are 92 health systems and 204 hospitals in 34 states participating in the Acute Hospital Care at Home program.

92 Health Systems

204 Hospitals

34 States

Temporarily extending the Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver will allow for additional data collection and inform lessons learned, as well as provide the necessary time for a legislative process to establish a permanent Acute Care at Home program for Medicare patients.

Benefits to Acute Care at Home Programs

Acute Care at Home Models Reduce Costs – In general, acute care at home programs have realized savings of 30 percent or more per admission, while maintaining equivalent or better outcomes.

Acute Care at Home Models Improve Quality – Quality results for care in the home are comparable to or better than those realized for facility-based care. Programs have proven to reduce average length of stay, readmissions, mortality, complications (e.g., delirium and falls), and emergency department visits.

Consumers Prefer to Receive Care in the Home – The pandemic has taught us that home-based care is preferred by many patients. Americans have indicated that they want to receive care at home with the demand for services provided in the safety of a patient's home soaring during the pandemic. According to a recent study, an overwhelming majority of people who have received care in the home were satisfied (88 percent) and would be likely to recommend to family and friends (85 percent).

Home-Based Models Contribute to Improving Disparities and Trust – Home-based models provide marginalized communities the option to conveniently receive care at home, which helps to reduce barriers to facility-based care such as access to transportation. Home-based care also promotes trust and communication between the patient and provider by removing institutional barriers and placing the interaction in a familiar setting.

Pandemic Experience has Further Demonstrated it is Safe to Provide Care in the Home – The pandemic caused an explosion of home-based care, in part due to regulatory flexibilities such as the Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver. Even before the pandemic, Medicare Advantage plans have successfully been partnering with entities to reimburse for acute care in the home. These experiences, in addition to decades of previous data and research, demonstrate that care in the home is possible and safe.