

## Congress Sends Letters to Biden Administration Urging Support of Key Hospital Priorities

Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives voiced support for key hospital priorities recently in separate letters to the Biden administration.

In a [July 21 letter](#) to Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra, a bipartisan group of 25 House members expressed their support for continued flexibility for critical access hospitals (CAHs). Specifically, the letter called for HHS to address how it will allow for continued flexibility in the requirement that hospitals certify patients being admitted will be discharged or transferred within 96 hours. WHA has continued to advocate for allowing hospitals to [maintain flexibilities](#) made possible by the [public health emergency](#), noting that hospitals continue to face challenges in transferring patients to both acute and post-acute settings.

"CAHs remain a vital source of care in many rural communities, and reinstatement of the 96-hour rule would unnecessarily take decisions about a patient's care away from the patient and their physician. While the 96-hour conditions for participation or payment have not been enforced in the last several years, the eventual and necessary end of the PHE raises concerns that one or both elements could be prioritized for enforcement" wrote the signors, who included Reps. Ron Kind and Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin.

In a separate [July 26 letter](#), a bipartisan group of nearly 150 members of Congress, including Rep. Ron Kind from Wisconsin, expressed concerns over the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) recently-released Inpatient Prospective Payment Services (IPPS) rule not accurately reflecting the true inflationary environment hospitals are currently operating in.

"We worry the proposed payment updates do not accurately reflect today's cost of patient care and, when tethered with other policy changes included in the proposed rule, would result in a payment decrease for IPPS hospitals in FY 2023," wrote the signors of the letter.

WHA sent out a HEAT alert last week to its members urging them to contact their federal representatives and is continuing to highlight this issue in discussions with lawmakers.

Contact WHA's Vice President of Federal & State Relations [Jon Hoelter](#) with questions.



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