

WHA Urges Congress to Act Quickly on Health Care Extensions as Federal Spending Package Collapses

On Dec. 19, [WHA sent a letter to Wisconsin's Congressional Delegation](#) urging Congress to act swiftly to extend crucial health care priorities that are scheduled to expire by the end of 2024, including:

- Telehealth
- Hospital at Home
- Medicare-Dependent and Low-Volume Hospital designations.

As covered in [last week's edition of The Valued Voice](#), WHA was on Capitol Hill last week with a group of health care advocates stressing the importance of Congress working to extend all three, as well as acting on important legislation to [reform Prior Authorization in Medicare Advantage](#) and resolve the issue of drug companies denying [340B discounts](#) at community contract pharmacies and PBMs pocketing the 340B savings intended for safety-net health care providers.

Late on Dec. 17, Congressional leaders in the House of Representatives unveiled a continuing resolution to fund the government through March 14, 2025, which included various other priorities such as disaster aid, farm bill provisions, and longer extensions for a number of health care items. Specifically, the legislation would have provided a 2-year extension for Medicare telehealth flexibilities, a five-year extension for the Hospital at Home program, and a 1-year extension for the Medicare-Dependent and Low-Volume hospital programs, as well as numerous other health care provisions.

Late on Dec. 18, President-Elect Donald Trump and Vice President-Elect JD Vance shared a joint statement on X opposing much of the other items in the CR spending package, such as pay raises for members of Congress, and urged Congress to instead work on extending funding for farmers, paying for disaster relief, and extending the debt ceiling, without including what they perceived to be unnecessary items put into the package to gain Democratic support for its passage. This appears to have collapsed support for the package's chance at passage, leaving it unclear how Congress would avoid a government shutdown if something is not passed by Dec. 20.

In WHA's Dec. 19 letter to Wisconsin's Congressional Delegation, WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding reiterated the importance of Congress acting quickly to avoid canceled telehealth patient appointments as well as disruption to patients currently enrolled in the Hospital at Home program. Borgerding also highlighted the importance of funding for the Medicare-Dependent and Low-Volume hospital programs for continued viability of those rural hospitals. WHA also sent out a HEAT alert to its members urging WHA's Congressional Delegation members to contact leadership stressing the importance of Congress acting quickly on these priorities.

According to news reports, Congressional leaders were huddling in Speaker Mike Johnson's office early on Dec. 19, hashing out a way to avoid a government shutdown, but it remains unclear what Congress will do. The current continuing resolution to fund the federal government expires on Dec. 20, and the previously mentioned health care programs all expire on Dec. 31.

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

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