

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Tom Carper
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Scott
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Carper and Scott:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write in support of the Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act. This important legislation will ensure that AAMC member teaching hospitals across the country that have implemented Acute Hospital Care at Home (AHCAH) waivers throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) will be able to continue delivering hospital-level treatments to patients in their homes for at least two years after the expiration of the PHE.

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) is a nonprofit association dedicated to transforming health through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 155 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; approximately 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and the millions of individuals employed across academic medicine, including more than 186,000 full-time faculty members, 94,000 medical students, 145,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) launched the Hospital Without Walls program in March 2020 to allow hospitals to provide services beyond their existing walls to help address the need to expand care capacity and to develop sites dedicated to COVID-19 treatment. AHCAH is an expansion of this initiative that allows eligible hospitals to have regulatory flexibility to treat certain patients, who would otherwise be admitted to the hospital, in their homes and receive Medicare payment under the Inpatient Prospective Payment System. The Acute Hospital Care at Home program launched with six health care systems that had experience with providing acute hospital care in a patient's home. To date, 202 hospitals within 92 systems located in 34 states – including many teaching hospitals – have received waivers from CMS to

participate in the program.¹ The increase in hospital participation underscores the critical need for continued flexibility to meet the health care needs of certain patients without having to admit them into the inpatient setting. As teaching hospitals have surged to meet the capacity demands imposed on them by the PHE, AHCAH programs have become a valuable resource to both alleviate capacity issues and provide patients access to care.

AAMC member teaching hospitals report positive outcomes and high patient satisfaction from their AHCAH patients. Hospitals have made robust investments in their programs with some viewing their AHCAH programs as a long-term solution to ongoing capacity issues. However, teaching hospitals and their patients face uncertainty regarding the future of the program due to its reliance on the consistent renewal of the PHE.

The Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act would extend the existing AHCAH waiver for two years after the end of the PHE. It would also require CMS to issue regulations to establish health and safety requirements for AHCAH programs. The AAMC believes this legislation is crucial to not only ensuring that AHCAH waiver programs do not abruptly end, but also allowing for additional time to evaluate the programs to determine a long-term payment model.

The AAMC appreciates your leadership on the Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that patients can access AHCAH programs after the PHE. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or Ally Perleoni (aperleoni@aamc.org) Manager, Government Relations.

Sincerely,



Karen Fisher, JD
Chief Public Policy Officer
Association of American Medical Colleges

¹ <https://qualitynet.cms.gov/acute-hospital-care-at-home/resources>