

U.S. Rep. Kind, colleague: Introduce Fairness for Rural Medicare Beneficiaries Act

Posted on Friday, Oct 22, 2021

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Washington, DC – Yesterday, **Rep. Ron Kind (WI-03)** joined **Rep. Tom Cole (OK-04)** in introducing the *Fairness for Rural Medicare Beneficiaries Act*. This bipartisan legislation would change an existing policy that requires Medicare beneficiaries at rural critical access hospitals (CAHs) to pay more in coinsurance than patients who receive the same care at larger acute care hospitals.

“Critical Access Hospitals serve families across Wisconsin, especially in rural regions, but many Medicare beneficiaries are stuck paying higher prices just because of where they obtain care. The Fairness for Rural Medicare Beneficiaries Act will help right this wrong and make sure Medicare beneficiaries aren’t financially penalized for accessing care close to home,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**.

“I am proud to join my colleague Congressman Ron Kind in introducing bipartisan legislation that improves access and affordability of hospitals for older Americans living in rural communities. Specifically, our commonsense bill, the Fairness for Rural Beneficiaries Act, brings needed parity for Medicare beneficiaries to the costs associated with receiving care, whether that is in a rural or urban facility,” said **Rep. Tom Cole**.

“The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) applauds Representatives Cole and Kind for introducing the Fairness for Rural Medicare Beneficiaries Act. Under current law, when a patient goes to a critical access hospital (CAH) they are billed 20 percent of the cost of charges submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

Services (CMS). In other hospital settings, because they're reimbursed through a different fee schedule, patients are billed 20 percent of the reasonable costs determined by CMS for that procedure. Unfortunately, what this looks like on the ground is rural patients being charged more for coinsurance because of where they obtain care geographically. This is wrong. NRHA applauds Representatives Cole and Kind for introducing this important legislation to eliminate what is essentially a tax on patients seeking care in rural communities," said **Alan Morgan, Chief Executive Officer of the National Rural Health Association.**

"We support the Fairness for Rural Medicare Beneficiaries Act to eliminate the out of pocket payment difference between acute care facilities and critical access hospitals. Medicare patients in rural Oklahoma or rural Wisconsin shouldn't have to pay more out of pocket at critical access hospitals. This bill will level the playing field," said **Laura Kaiser, President and Chief Executive Officer, SSM Health.**

"Gundersen Health System would like to commend Rep. Kind and Rep. Cole for their introduction of the bipartisan Fairness for Rural Medicare Beneficiaries Act. Critical Access Hospitals are key to ensuring access to high quality care for Midwest families, and Medicare beneficiaries should not be financially penalized simply because they choose to receive care in a particular setting. Fairness for these patients is long overdue, and we look forward to working with Reps. Kind and Cole to help fix this longtime inequity," said **Nathan Franklin, Director of External Affairs.**

"The Fairness for Rural Medicare Beneficiaries Act would seek to eliminate the perverse incentives to send care outside rural communities. Rural residents seek out local care and shouldn't be financially incentivized to leave their community," said **Tim Size, Executive Director, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative.**

Rep. Kind is the co-chair of the House Rural Health Care Coalition and serves on the Subcommittee on Health for the Ways and Means Committee, the most powerful - and the oldest - committee in the House of Representatives. It has jurisdiction over tax measures, the management of public debt, trade and tariff laws, Social Security, Medicare, pensions, and many other economic growth measures.



Read the bipartisan bill [here](#).