

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces bipartisan legislation to crack down on anti-competitive practices in health care

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**Washington, D.C.** – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Mike Braun (R-IN) introduced the Healthy Competition for Better Care Act, bipartisan legislation that would crack down on anti-competitive practices and make health care better for patients by ensuring that contracts between health insurance issuers and health systems advance quality and affordability.

“When large health systems engage in anticompetitive practices that restrict transparency, reduce choices, and drive up health care costs, we should do something about it,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “As part of my ongoing efforts to expand access to quality, affordable healthcare and lower costs, I am proud to join Senator Braun in introducing the bipartisan *Healthy Competition for Better Care Act* to improve care delivery and lower costs for consumers.”

“Since I’ve come to Washington, I have been one of the leading voices on health care reform and have put forth many much-needed solutions to address rising prices and access challenges in the industry,” **said Senator Braun.** “The *Healthy Competition for Better Care Act* would put an end to anti-competitive practices and increase transparency in health systems so Americans can access services that are best suited to their needs.”

Specifically, the *Healthy Competition for Better Care Act* would:

- Allow discounts or incentives for enrollees who choose high-quality and low-cost providers;
- Allow insurers and employers to contract with the right hospitals and providers for their patients, without requirements to enter into additional contracts with other affiliated providers or hospitals;
- Allow health insurance issuers to negotiate their own rates with other providers who are not party to the contract of the provider involved
- Allow hospitals and issuers to freely negotiate prices, without requirements to pay higher amounts for items or services than other issuers have agreed to

The bill includes exceptions for certain group model issuers, including health maintenance organizations, and value-based network arrangement, such as an exclusive provider network or accountable care organization.

The bipartisan legislation also has widespread support from health, family and business advocates.

“Families USA praises Senators Tammy Baldwin and Mike Braun for introducing the *Competition for Better Care Act*. This legislation is an important step to begin restoring competitive health care markets across the country that will lead to improved access to affordable, high quality health care for everyone,” **said Jen Taylor, Senior Director of Federal Relations at Families USA.** “Despite the fact that the United States spends more money per person on health care than any other country, two-thirds of Americans believe that, as a country, we do not get value from our health care system. This is a critical moment for lawmakers to take action to lower health costs and improve the quality of care for America’s families, workers and employers. We urge Congress to advance this important legislation without delay.”

“The Healthy Competition for Better Care Act is an essential step in addressing the high costs of health care and improving patient choice,” **said Annette Guarisco Fildes, President and CEO of The ERISA Industry Committee.** “Employers and employees want access to the best care at the best prices. This legislation will drive high-value health care options for patients.”

“In order for health care to work like other markets, employers need to be able to move business to providers that deliver good care at lower prices,” **said Cheryl DeMars, CEO of The Alliance.** “Their health plans and networks need to be able to support these strategies without retaliation from providers.”

“The only way to lower health care costs effectively is by addressing the root causes of rising prices – including anti-competitive contracting that stifle choice and competition,” **said Ilyse Schuman, Senior Vice President of Health Policy at the American Benefits Council.** “The bill introduced today by Senators Tammy Baldwin and Mike Braun will help lower costs by promoting competition in the health care market and employer innovations that prioritize high-value care. We applaud the Senators for their leadership and urge Congress to pass this legislation.”

“This legislation is a great step forward in addressing the dysfunctional hospital contracting market that is exasperated by consolidation,” **said Bret Jackson, President of The Economic Alliance for Michigan.** “A big thanks for Senators Braun and Baldwin for leading the charge!”

“NAIFA applauds the bipartisan leadership of Senators Baldwin and Braun to improve patient choice and reduce costs for consumers, and urges Congress to pass the Healthy Competition for Better Care Act,” **said Kevin M. Mayeux, CAE & CEO of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors.**

“Most health markets are highly concentrated, with mergers and acquisitions increasing at an alarming rate. Congress should act foster competition in health care by ending anti-competitive arrangements that limit competition, raise costs, and decrease consumer choices,” **said Joel White, President of the Council for Affordable Health Coverage.** “The Healthy Competition for Better Care Act achieves this goal. The Council for Affordable Health Coverage strongly supports the bill and hopes it is enacted quickly.”

Read more about this legislation [here](#).

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