



**GRASSROOTS ALERT! *ACTION NEEDED:*
CALL YOUR CONGRESSMAN TODAY
URGE THEM TO OPPOSE HOME HEALTH COPAYMENTS**

On June 18, the House Ways and Means Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee will be marking-up new legislation on Medicare in anticipation of passing a bill containing prescription drug coverage, provider reimbursement changes, and some Medicare restructuring in time for the July 4 recess.

Currently the Ways and Means bill is expected to contain more Medicare restructuring than Energy and Commerce's, as well as a \$40.00 per episode beneficiary copayment for each home health episode of care, competitive bidding for durable medical equipment, and more funding for Medicare+Choice plans.

We urge you to continue to contact your U.S. Representatives in the next few days and ask them to tell Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas (R-CA) that they cannot support a home health copayment of any size.

Tell your Representatives that:

- Your patients cannot afford a copayment. They are confined to home, unable to work, and have little or no income.
- Home health patients are older, sicker, and poorer than the average Medicare patient. They use other types of Medicare services at a much greater rate than the average beneficiary. They are likely to be paying copayments and deductibles on the other services they have been using.
- A home health copayment of \$40.00 per episode will disproportionately impact sicker, poorer patients.
- It is not true that home health is the only benefit without a copayment. There is no copayment or deductible on outpatient clinical lab services.
- HHAs cannot afford the cost and administrative burden of implementing a new collection system for copayments when they are facing implementation of OBQI and HIPAA privacy and transaction standards, as well as continuing to make repayment of IPS overpayments.

- It is not necessary to implement a copayment to limit the growth of homecare, which CMS erroneously claims is 30 percent. Congress relied upon erroneous HCFA claims of home health growth and inappropriate payments in passing the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which ended up cutting the benefit by over 50 percent and eliminating one million patients from home health care.

What to do:

- Find out who your Representative is and whether they are a Democrat or Republican. For assistance simply log on to www.aahomecare.org. At the bottom of the main web page enter your zip code in the box entitled "Write to Congress."
- If you know this information you can simply call the congressional switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to speak to your Representative.
- If your Representative is on House Ways and Means or House Energy and Commerce ask them to oppose the inclusion of a home health copayment in the Medicare bill.

If your Representative is not on the Ways and Means or Energy and Commerce Committees, ask:

- **Democrat Representatives to CALL Congressmen Pete Stark and Sherrod Brown asking them to oppose the inclusion of a home health copayment in the Medicare bill.**
- **Republican Representatives to CALL Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas and Energy and Commerce Chairman Billy Tauzin asking them to oppose the inclusion of a home health copayment in the Medicare bill.**