



National Alliance  
for Care at Home

One Voice for Care at Home | Advocacy

# Protect Access to Medicare Home Health

## Support the Medicare Home Health Payment Integrity and Protection Act (S. 5250)

### THE ASK

We encourage Congress to pass the **Medicare Home Health Payment Integrity and Protection Act (S. 5250)** to stabilize Medicare's home health payment system and improve patient access to high-quality care through reforms that strengthen program integrity. By stabilizing reimbursement, correcting flaws in Medicare rate updates, and streamlining program integrity measures, more individuals will be able to access high-quality care in the home.

### TOPLINE

- Each year, America's home health providers help millions of patients receive care safely at home, maintain their independence, and avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and institutional care. A stable home health infrastructure under Medicare depends on providers' ability to deliver this essential care with adequate payment rates, improved patient access to care, and proper oversight measures to combat fraud and abuse.
- Providers are already straining under negative margins, rising costs, staffing challenges, constrained patient access to care, and broad program integrity proposals that do not distinguish bad actors from legitimate providers operating in good faith.
- Previous rate cuts were built on data entirely unrelated to the payment system adopted in 2020, along with data tainted by the inclusion of fraudulent providers in the rate analysis.

### RATIONALE

#### The Access Crisis is Already Putting Patients at Risk

- **Half of all U.S. counties** lost at least one home health agency between 2020-2024, and in 80%+ of counties, home health agencies (HHAs) are treating lower numbers of traditional Medicare patients.
- **Over one-third of patients** referred for home health never receive it, often because of home health agency capacity constraints and workforce shortages exacerbated by underfunding.
- **10% of referrals** wait at least five days to receive a visit, with even longer delays in rural areas.

#### Inadequate Reimbursement Undermines Value-Based, Patient-Centered Care

- When patients do not receive home health ordered after hospital discharge, outcomes worsen and costs rise: **35% higher** hospital readmission rates, **43% higher** mortality rates, **16% higher** emergency department use, and **5.4% higher** total Medicare spending.<sup>1</sup> Access to care has worsened in the last three years and is even more constrained in rural areas.<sup>2</sup>
- Since 2019, **more than 1,000 home health agencies** have closed, and thousands more are at heightened risk of closing or scaling back services because of insufficient and unpredictable reimbursement across payers and workforce strain.

#### Problems with CMS Payment Methodology

- CMS has failed to distinguish provider behavioral changes tied to the new payment model from those driven by COVID-19, workforce shortages, and care delivery evolution, and its rate analysis has been corrupted by data from fraudulent providers.
- Eliminating fraud in the Medicare benefit through targeted, data-driven measures is essential to protecting aging Americans, maintaining trust in home-based services, and ensuring reimbursement rates are accurate.



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## SOLUTION

Introduced by Senator Susan Collins and Senator Marsha Blackburn, the Medicare Home Health Payment Integrity and Protection Act of 2026 (S. 5250) corrects CMS's methodological flaws in calculating rate updates and streamlines program integrity measures to target actual fraud concerns.

The bill would reset home health payment rates to account for outlier instances of fraud that distort data, implement precise targeting of problematic areas, and increase oversight of home care providers. Importantly, the legislation would safeguard patients and caregivers alike, along with the programs that support healthcare at home services.

## BOTTOM LINE

Congress should protect access to home health by passing the **Medicare Home Health Payment Integrity and Protection Act (S. 5250)** so individuals and families can receive care in the setting they prefer: home.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT**  
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1. <https://carejourney.com/how-timely-access-to-home-health-care-impacts-cost-and-outcomes/>
2. [https://allianceforcareathome.org/wp-content/uploads/Alliance-CY-2027-HH-Proposed-Rule-Comment\\_8.31.26.pdf](https://allianceforcareathome.org/wp-content/uploads/Alliance-CY-2027-HH-Proposed-Rule-Comment_8.31.26.pdf)

