



AAA Government Affairs E-Update March 3, 2011

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1. Medicare Ambulance Relief Bill Introduced in Senate

On Tuesday, March 1, Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) reintroduced the *Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act* (S. 424). Parallel to the bill last Congress, S. 424 would implement a 6% increase under the Medicare ambulance fee schedule for ambulance transports originating in urban and rural areas and extend the bonus base payment of 22.6% for ambulance transports originating in super rural areas. In order to reduce the overall cost of the bill, however, the duration of the relief was scaled back to five years.

The relief under S. 424 would take effect January 1, 2012 and replace the current temporary relief of 2% urban, 3% rural and the super rural bonus payment which are set to expire at the end of this year. In the near future, the AAA will be launching a Call To Action to request AAA members to contact their Senators in support of cosponsoring the legislation.

2. Boustany and Neal to Introduce Ambulance Relief Bill in House

Congressman Charles Boustany (R-LA) has agreed to be the lead House sponsor of the *Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act* in the House. Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA), who was lead sponsor of the bill in the House last Congress, has again agreed to be the lead Democrat on the bill. Congressman Fred Upton (R-MI), who was the lead Republican of the House bill last Congress, is now Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee which has joint jurisdiction over the Medicare program and had to decline championing the bill again this year. Congressman Upton, however, will continue to be supportive of Medicare ambulance relief.

The House version of the *Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act* will be the same language as the Senate companion bill. The AAA is working with the offices of Congressmen Boustany and Neal to have the bill introduced very shortly. We will notify you as soon as that occurs.

3. AAA Lobby Days a Huge Success

Approximately 50 ambulance service professionals traveled to Washington, DC earlier this week to meet with their members of Congress. As a result of the meetings with the offices of over 100 members of Congress, several Senators and Representatives have already agreed to support

Medicare ambulance relief and cosponsor the *Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act of 2011* (MAAPA). Numerous members of Congress also agreed to support efforts to expand the Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) program to paramedics who are employed by nongovernmental EMS agencies and will cosponsor the *Dale Long Act* (S. 385). We will include a running list of cosponsors of the MAAPA and the *Dale Long Act* in future *E-Updates*. Thank you to all of you who traveled to Washington, DC this week to meet with your members of Congress!

4. House Votes to Repeal 1099 Reporting Requirement

Earlier today, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to repeal the 1099 tax reporting requirements provision included in the health care reform bill. The vote to approve the Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act of 2011 (H.R. 4) was 314 to 112. Congressional Republicans, Democrats and the President support repealing the provision, which requires businesses to report to the IRS all purchases of \$600 or more. However, a majority of House Democrats voted against the measure because they objected to the offset which would force greater repayment of health insurance subsidies under the health care reform law for families whose income exceeds certain thresholds. The Senate passed a similar provision as part of the FAA Reauthorization Bill but would use unspent federal funds to pay for the repeal.

5. REMINDER: Details of Next Ambulance Open Door Forum

The next Ambulance Open Door Forum is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. (eastern). To participate in the Forum, dial 1-800-837-1935 and provide the operator with the conference ID number of 44699192 and your name, organization name and the state from which you are calling. Below are more details on the Forum.

CMS Ambulance Open Door Forum

Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2011

Time: 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. (eastern)

Conference Call Number: 1-800-837-1935

Conference ID: 44699192

Conference Leaders: Dr. Bill Rogers/John Warren/Natalie Highsmith

TTY Communications Relay Services are available for the hearing impaired. For TTY services dial 7-1-1 or 1-800-855-2880 and for Internet Relay services click here <http://relayservices.att.com/>. A relay communications assistant will help.

ENCORE: Call Number 1-800-642-1687; Conference ID Number of 44699192. "Encore" is a recording of this call that can be accessed by dialing 1-800-642-1687 and entering the Conference ID number of 44699192. You can access the recording of the call from Wednesday, April 6, after 5:00 p.m. (EST) through Monday, April 11.