

Action Alert from National APSE 12/11/2009

Tell Your Senators to Pass the Cardin and Specter Amendments

This week, members of the U.S. Senate are considering amendments to the Senate Health Care Reform bill, H.R. 3590 - the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). APSE urges its members to contact their Senators and request their support of these amendments.

The "patient protection" amendment, introduced by Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), is based on the Patients' Bill of Rights (which never became law) and includes provisions to improve timely access to specialty services, including access to specialists care coordinators for people with disabilities and chronic conditions; limitations on utilization review for denying coverage; improved access to emergency and ambulance services; access to specialized primary care services, particularly for women and children; and better protection of medical communications.

The "clawback amendment," filed by Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA), protects Medicare beneficiaries' current choice to purchase power wheelchairs in the first month of use. The amendment is in response to a provision in the Senate bill which would eliminate patient choice by forcing beneficiaries to rent their mobility device for thirteen months before they can own it. Not allowing patient choice means that individuals who need certain types of custom devices would have limited access. The clawback amendment exempts complex rehabilitation wheelchairs and would allow a person who a doctor decides will need a wheelchair for at least 13 months, the opportunity to buy the wheelchair up front, in the first month. If the individual ends up not needing the device for 13 months, Medicare can "clawback" the difference in value paid to the supplier.

It's easy to do! Just visit www.senate.gov to find your Senators (locate your state by clicking on the drop-down box in the upper left hand corner). Then call the Senate switchboard at (202) 224-3121, ask for your Senators, and tell them to pass the Cardin amendment and the Specter amendment.

Thank You!