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Thursday, January 22, 2026

Congress Releases Appropriations Package with Key Health Care Extenders

On Jan. 20, the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees released legislative text for the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026. The legislation contains key health care extender provisions supported by WHA, including:

- Funding for Medicare-Dependent and Low-Volume Hospitals through the end of 2026.
- Funding for telehealth waivers through the end of 2027.
- Funding for the Hospital at Home program through the end of 2030.

Unfortunately, the package also includes a provision requiring each off-campus hospital outpatient department (HOPD) to be assigned a separate, unique health identifier as a Medicare condition of payment. WHA and the American Hospital Association have argued this is unnecessary and duplicative because service codes already differentiate the place of service for such locations. The provisions would appear to add to hospitals' administrative burden without a clear public policy benefit.

The U.S. House is aiming to pass this package before it adjourns later this week. The U.S. Senate will then need to pass it before funding expires on Jan. 30.

Contact WHA Vice President of Federal Affairs and Advocacy Jon Hoelter with questions.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Assembly Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care Advances WHA-Supported Next-of-Kin Legislation
- Congress Releases Appropriations Package with Key Health Care Extenders
- CMS Webinar to Discuss 2026 Hospital Price Transparency Requirements
- HSHS Sister Maureen Fagan Receives WHA Trustee Award
- Recap of Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers: Well-Being First Champion Challenge for Credentialing Kickoff

EDUCATION EVENTS

Feb. 10, 2026

Age-Friendly Webinar Series Featuring Advocate Health

Feb. 25, 2026

2026 Advocacy Day

Mar. 13, 2026

2026 Physician Leadership Development Conference