



Society of Hospital Medicine

Hill Day

SHM Members Take to Capitol Hill to Advocate for Hospitalists and Their Patients

On October 19, 2023, SHM members from 16 states, including SHM's Public Policy Committee (PPC), as well as members from some of SHM's Chapters, attended this year's Hill Day. Throughout the day participants had a chance to meet with their Congressional offices, and in some cases, directly with their Representative. During these meetings, attendees educated staffers about the role of a hospitalist and the importance of hospital medicine. They visited 43 different offices, and many got a chance to attend a House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health hearing on patient access to care and minimizing administrative red tape for clinicians. Learn more about the issues we brought to the Hill below.



Policy Asks:

Reauthorize the Conrad 30 Program

SHM urged Congress to support the passage of the Conrad State 30 and Physician Reauthorization Act (H.R. 4942/S. 665). This legislation would reauthorize an existing program that has enabled upwards of 15,000 immigrant physicians on a J-1 visa to remain in the United States and immediately apply for an H-1B visa or a green card if they work in an underserved area for at least three years. This legislation is an important component to address physician staffing shortages, which have continued to worsen after the pandemic.

Count Observation Time Towards SNF Coverage

Despite receiving care in the hospital, patients who are under observation are considered outpatients, and that time does not count towards the three inpatient days required for skilled nursing facility (SNF) coverage after their hospitalization. The care they receive is virtually identical to the care for patients admitted as inpatients. SHM supports the passage of the Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act (H.R. 5138), to make observation days count towards Medicare's three-day requirement for SNF coverage. This is an important first step to address problems with observation.

Medicare Payment Reform

In 2024, hospitalists and other clinicians who bill Medicare face another significant cut to their reimbursement rates as a result of budget neutrality adjustments and expiration of a legislative update, in addition to the impact of inflation. The impending payment cuts will exacerbate staffing shortages, hamper efforts to address burnout, and risk further damaging an already vulnerable healthcare system.

We urged Congress to take action to stop these cuts before they go into effect at the end of the year. To improve the strength and stability of the Medicare payment system, we also support:

- The Strengthening Medicare for Patients and Providers Act (H.R. 2474), which provides inflationary updates based on the Medicare Economic Index.
- The discussion draft of the Provider Reimbursement Stability Act of 2023, developed by Reps. Wenstrup, Burgess, and Murphy, the co-chairs of the Doctors Caucus, which addresses issues with the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule budget neutrality and conversion factor.

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