

Support Access to Occupational Therapy Home Health Services under Medicare

Note: *Begin by explaining why occupational therapy is already an important service in home health for Medicare beneficiaries with chronic conditions, dementia, or functional limitations. Share a personal or clinical example if you have one.*

Key Points

- Occupational therapy provided in the home enables people to remain safe and independent by addressing physical, cognitive, and behavioral challenges that affect daily life.
- OT is already covered under Medicare home health, but it cannot be the only service a person receives when they start a home health episode of care.
- This means many people who would benefit from OT, but don't need nursing or other therapies at that time, do not receive OT in the home.
- This creates a gap in access for people with conditions like dementia, low vision, diabetes, COPD, and other chronic illnesses who may not need nursing or PT at the time but do need help managing daily activities, preventing falls, or staying safe at home.

The Bill: H.R. 2013, the Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

- H.R.2013 would allow OT to be ordered as a stand-alone service under the Medicare home health benefit — removing an existing barrier to care.
- *It does not create a new Medicare benefit* or change OT's scope of practice. It simply ensures that people can access OT services if that is all they need at the time.
- Evidence shows that OT in the home reduces hospitalizations, falls, and caregiver burden and therefore saves Medicare money by avoiding ER visits, hospitalizations and even institutionalizations.
- The bill has bipartisan support and has been endorsed by other national organizations, including ADVION, National Alliance for Care at Home, National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies (NARA) and the National Rural Health Association (NRHA).

Your Ask: Please co-sponsor the Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act (H.R. 2013) or support the bill when introduced in the Senate.