



American
Occupational Therapy
Association

Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

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Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

Legislative Background

- OT is a Medicare home health benefit, but not a “qualifying benefit,” i.e. OT cannot be ordered by itself, must be ordered with nursing, PT or speech
- OT was added as qualifying benefit in 1980, but removed in 1981 for budgetary reasons
- Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is now scoring legislation to reestablish OT as qualifying benefit

Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

- H.R. 2013 – Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act
- Lead Sponsors:
 - Lloyd Smucker, R-PA, Ways & Means Committee
 - Lloyd Doggett, D-TX, Ways & Means
 - John Joyce, MD, R-PA, Energy & Commerce Committee
 - Paul Tonko, D-NY, Energy & Commerce
- 28 Bi-partisan co-sponsors (15R/13D)
- The Alliance (NAHC), NARA, ADVION, NRHA Endorsement

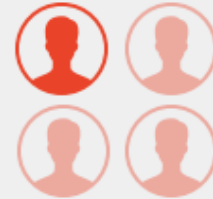
Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

- Some patients only need OT at start of care
 - Falls prevention
 - Low vision
 - Dementia
 - Upper extremity patients

Support the Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

Establishing occupational therapy (OT) as a Medicare home health qualifying service will help seniors avoid costly interventions.

1 in 4 seniors 65+ has



a fall annually

Total = 29 million falls¹



3 million
emergency
department visits¹



950,000
hospitalizations,
or rehab stays¹



32,000
deaths from fall-
related injuries¹

Economic Cost

The US spends \$50 billion annually related to falls.²

Cost-Benefit of OT

A recent study indicated home modifications delivered by OT showed potential to avert \$442 million in direct medical costs and prevent nearly 1/3 of falls among seniors.³ Another study found that OT home assessment reduced falls by 40% in high-risk seniors.⁴

Evidence also shows that OT-led home modifications reduced hospital readmissions, saving \$22,120 per senior over two years.⁵⁻⁶

Further research demonstrates that seniors participating in OT-led home modifications experienced a 30% decrease in disability in basic self-care, as well as reduced depression and pain.⁶⁻⁷

Additionally, a 2023 study found that two OT home modification visits were cost-effective to support successful aging at home compared to paid caregiving or institutional care.⁸

Role of OT in the Home: Fall Prevention

Assess physical, behavioral, and environmental factors and provide intervention to reduce fall and injury risk, improve home safety, and maximize function so seniors remain independent in their homes.⁹

<https://www.aota.org/advocacy/advocacy-news/2023/ot-as-a-qualifying-service-in-medicare-home-health-fact-sheet>



COLUMNS

Enhancing access to OT for Medicare beneficiaries improves outcomes, lowers costs



REP. LLOYD SMUCKER (R-PA)

APRIL 30, 2024

SHARE ▾

For many seniors on Medicare, occupational therapy (OT) is a vital service that provides many benefits. By working to help seniors move around their homes, improve fine motor skills and [prevent falls](#), OT helps patients perform daily tasks safely and stay independent longer.

Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

How to describe legislation during Hill Day meeting

- Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act
- OT is already a Medicare home health service
- Bill would allow OT to be ordered by itself for Medicare home health patients without nursing, PT or speech added to order
- H.R. 2013 in the House
 - Lead Sponsors: Reps Lloyd Smucker and Lloyd Doggett
 - 28 bi-partisan co-sponsors 15R/13D
- Senate introduction in future

Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

Key points to make in your Hill Day meeting

- Sometimes, home **patient only needs OT**. Policy as is:
 - **Bad Option 1:** Patient should NOT receive OT at home. This can lead to accidents/falls/inability to remain safely at home.
 - **Bad Option 2:** Another unnecessary service added to order, usually nursing, to allow OT in the door. This wastes nurses time in era of nursing shortages, especially in rural areas.
 - **Solution:** HR2013 would prevent either bad outcome by allowing OT to be the only service provided in the home

Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

Key points to make in your Hill Day meeting

- Benefits of H.R.2013 Passage:
 - **Benefit 1:** Patients who receive OT experience fewer falls/accidents in the home.
 - **Benefit 2:** Ability to live safely at home creates savings for Medicare, avoided ER visits, hospitalizations and even institutionalizations.
 - ❑ Multiple studies demonstrate these savings. MHHA Fact Sheet lists studies

Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

Key points to make in your Hill Day meeting

- Bill is supported by groups representing home health agencies and therapy providers
- Bill is supported by **National Rural Health Association** to remove especially burdensome barrier in rural areas
- Bill does NOT change scope of services provided.
 - ❑ OTPs providing OT services only
- **No opposition**

Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

Key points to make in your Hill Day meeting

House Meeting

Please co-sponsor HR2013

Senate Meeting

Legislation is pending, ask to support when introduced

Questions you cannot answer

Refer to AOTA, contact abopp@aota.org after meeting