

Advocacy Action Template

Instructions: Copy and paste the text below to an email to your Congressperson. Please remember to replace the text enclosed in brackets, and remove highlights before sending.

Dear Representative [insert the last name of your Congressperson here]:

My name is [insert your name]. I am contacting you regarding the *Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Therapy Act of 2017* (H.R. 626). As a constituent in your district and a recreational therapist, H.R. 626 is very important to me.

The purpose of this Act is to return the ability of rehabilitation physicians and treatment teams to use their professional judgment to provide patients in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals (IRFs) with the appropriate mix of medically necessary rehabilitation therapy services. These services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and, as needed, speech therapy, orthotics and prosthetics, and recreational therapy. Right now, Medicare beneficiaries are not receiving the benefits and services of recreational therapy, even if their physician deems this service is appropriate to meet their needs.

By including recreational therapy under the intensity of therapy requirement applicable to IRFs, Medicare beneficiaries in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and units will regain access to the mix of rehabilitation therapies that meets their specific needs as determined by their physician and treatment team, and not by arbitrary or bureaucratic rules. IRFs will be better able to meet the intensity of rehabilitation therapy requirement, thus reducing the risk that patients will be inappropriately diverted into less intensive post-acute settings.

Specifically, H.R. 626 adds the following new paragraph to the end of Section 1886(j) of the Social Security Act:

“(9) Including Recreational Therapy among the therapy modalities that constitute an intensive rehabilitation therapy program in a rehabilitation facility. – The Secretary shall include recreational therapy services among the therapeutic modalities that constitute an intensive rehabilitation program in determining (pursuant to applicable regulations) whether inpatient services in a rehabilitation facility are reasonable and necessary under section 1862(a)(1)(A).”

H.R. 626 is being supported by a number of national organizations including: American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association, American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists, American Therapeutic Recreation Association, Association of Rehabilitation Nurses, Brain Injury Association of America, CARF International, Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, Council on Brain Injury, and United Spinal Association

I am requesting your support of H.R. 626 and ask you to sign on as a co-sponsor. If you wish to do so, please contact Matt Brennen (202) 225-5121 in Congressman Thompson's office or Saul Hernandez (202) 225-3101 in Congressman Butterfield's office.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or need additional information. I will follow up with you regarding your decision on supporting H.R. 626 in the near future.

Your Name and credentials

Your address

Your phone number

Your email