March 11, 2024

The Honorable Jason Smith                   The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman       Ranking Member
Ways & Means Committee       Ways & Means Committee
Washington, DC 20510      Washington, DC 20510

RE: Requesting Extension of the Acute Hospital Care at Home Waiver

Dear Congressmen Smith and Neal,

The undersigned stakeholders, representing Hospital-at-Home (HaH) programs, physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, nurses, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, patient advocacy organizations, hospitals, health systems, and care model enablers, are writing to ask for at least a 5-year extension of the Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver program (AHCAH) before its expiration at the end of 2024. Without an extension, Medicare beneficiaries will lose access to HaH programs that have been demonstrated to provide excellent clinical outcomes and lower the costs of care.

Medicare created the AHCAH waiver at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic as part of a broad strategy to help alleviate hospital capacity issues. Prior to the implementation of the AHCAH waiver, approximately 20 HaH programs existed across the U.S. After the waiver, more than 300 hospitals across 129 health systems in 37 states are operating under the waiver—with no guarantee of payment permanence.¹,² That represents approximately 5% of all U.S. hospitals and 15% of academic medical centers. Clinical outcomes of the AHCAH program have been outstanding.³,⁴ At this current trajectory, 1 in 6 hospitals will have HaH by 2030, allowing hospital care to be delivered to more patients in the safety and comfort of their homes nationwide.

Hospital-at-Home has a long history. Over the past 30-plus years, HaH researchers have found through numerous studies that patients and family caregivers prefer HaH, which delivers excellent clinical outcomes, including substantial reductions in adverse events (e.g., mortality), better patient and family experience, lower caregiver stress, better functional outcomes, high provider satisfaction, and lower costs of care.⁵ As a result of these studies, we firmly believe that the AHCAH waiver, which provides appropriate payment for acute hospital-level care delivered at home, is the keystone to the future of home-based care delivery for Medicare patients and beyond.

To achieve this future, the waiver must be extended to enable hospitals and health systems nationwide to continue building out the logistics, supply chain, and workforce for Hospital-at-Home (HaH) and to encourage multiple payers outside the Medicare program, including Medicaid programs, to enter the HaH market. An extension will also allow home-based services to be developed equitably across populations everywhere and ensure hospital inpatient unit care is available for the patients who need it while enabling patients who can and want to be treated in their home to have the opportunity to do so, creating needed capacity for hospitals without increasing health system costs.

In order to avoid any disruption in access to Medicare beneficiaries, we ask that you extend the Medicare Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver program for at least five years before the end of 2024. We thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Hospital-at-Home program and provide our ideas for the future of the program. For more information on the HaH research and testing, please visit here. Should you have any questions, please reach out.

Respectfully submitted,

Acadian Ambulance Service, Inc.  
Acadian Health  
Advocate Health  
Alliance for Connected Care  
American Academy of Home Care Medicine  
American Medical Association  
American Paramedic Association  
Appalachian Regional Healthcare, Inc.  
Atrium Health  
Avera Health  
Baptist Health  
Bellin Health  
Best Buy Health Inc., a Best Buy Company  
Beth Israel Deaconess - Lahey Health  
Biofourmis, Inc.  
Blessing Health System  
ChristianaCare  
CommonSpirit Health  
DispatchHealth  
eShift Remote Care Delegation  
GE HealthCare  
Geisinger  
Hackensack Meridian Health  
Hattiesburg Clinic  
Health First Brevard County, FL  
Henry Ford Health  
Inbound Health  
Intermountain Health  
Johns Hopkins Health System  
Kent Hospital, Warwick, RI; a member of Care New England Health System  
Maribel Health  
Marshfield Clinic  
Mass General Brigham  
Medically Home  
Mercy Hospital at Home  
Michigan Medicine  
Mount Auburn Cambridge IPA  
Mount Sinai Health System  
Moving Health Home  
MultiCare Health System  
NYU Langone Health  
Ochsner Health  
Origin Healthcare  
Orlando Health  
OSF OnCall  
Right at Home  
Roper Saint Francis Healthcare  
Saint Peter's Healthcare System  
Sanford Health  
Shields at Home
Society of Hospital Medicine
St. Bernard's Healthcare
SwedishAmerican Medical Group, UW-Health Northern IL Region
Tampa General Hospital
Texas Health Resources
The American Telemedicine Association
The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care
The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
UC Davis Health System
UMass Memorial Health
UNC Health Pardee
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Virginia Commonwealth University Health System; VCU Health
Virginia Mason Franciscan Health
Virtua Health