

April 22, 2014

The Honorable Jim Renacci
House of Representatives
130 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Renacci:

The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) is pleased to offer its support of H.R. 4188, the *Establishing Beneficiary Equity in the Hospital Readmission Program Act*. The bill addresses some serious concerns about the Hospital Readmission Reduction Program by seeking reforms that better reflect the realities of patient care.

SHM represents the nation's more than 44,000 hospitalists who work primarily in acute inpatient settings. They specialize in caring for hospitalized patients, including large numbers of Medicare, Medicaid, and dually-eligible beneficiaries. Hospitalists are leaders in the area of care coordination and in efforts to reduce hospital readmissions through safe and effective care transitions.

In spite of these efforts, the Readmissions Reduction Program needs fine tuning to better account for preventable readmissions—those within the reasonable control of healthcare providers. Currently, the program not only uses a questionable 30-day readmission threshold but also fails to take into account the realities of caring for patients with varying needs and characteristics. This legislation would help account for these differences and prevent the risk of unfair penalties being imposed on hospitals and providers who treat extremely vulnerable patients.

SHM greatly appreciates your leadership and commitment in helping to refine the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program. We look forward to working with you to secure passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Burke T. Kealey, MD, SFHM
President
Society of Hospital Medicine