

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2624

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the provision of items and services provided to Medicare beneficiaries residing in rural areas.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 26, 2003

Mr. BOSWELL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the provision of items and services provided to Medicare beneficiaries residing in rural areas.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Medicare Fairness in
5 Reimbursement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. IMPROVING FAIRNESS OF PAYMENTS TO PRO-**
2 **VIDERS UNDER THE MEDICARE FEE-FOR-**
3 **SERVICE PROGRAM.**

4 Title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
5 1395 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
6 lowing new section:

7 “IMPROVING FAIRNESS OF PAYMENTS UNDER THE
8 ORIGINAL MEDICARE FEE-FOR-SERVICE PROGRAM

9 “SEC. 1897. (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF SYSTEM.—Not-
10 withstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary
11 shall establish a system for making adjustments to the
12 amount of payment made to entities and individuals for
13 items and services provided under the original medicare
14 fee-for-service program under parts A and B.

15 “(b) SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.—

16 “(1) ADJUSTMENTS.—Under the system de-
17 scribed in subsection (a), the Secretary (beginning in
18 2002) shall make the following adjustments:

19 “(A) CERTAIN STATES ABOVE NATIONAL
20 AVERAGE.—If a State average per beneficiary
21 amount for a year is greater than 105 percent
22 (or 110 percent in the case of the determination
23 made in 2001) of the national average per ben-
24 efiary amount for such year, then the Sec-
25 retary shall reduce the amount of applicable
26 payments in such a manner as will result (as

1 estimated by the Secretary) in the State aver-
2 age per beneficiary amount for the subsequent
3 year being at 105 percent (or 110 percent in
4 the case of payments made in 2002) of the na-
5 tional average per beneficiary amount for such
6 subsequent year.

7 “(B) CERTAIN STATES BELOW NATIONAL
8 AVERAGE.—If a State average per beneficiary
9 amount for a year is less than 95 percent (or
10 90 percent in the case of the determination
11 made in 2001) of the national average per ben-
12 eficiary amount for such year, then the Sec-
13 retary shall increase the amount of applicable
14 payments in such a manner as will result (as
15 estimated by the Secretary) in the State aver-
16 age per beneficiary amount for the subsequent
17 year being at 95 percent (or 90 percent in the
18 case of payments made in 2002) of the national
19 average per beneficiary amount for such subse-
20 quent year.

21 “(2) DETERMINATION OF AVERAGES.—

22 “(A) STATE AVERAGE PER BENEFICIARY
23 AMOUNT.—Each year (beginning in 2001), the
24 Secretary shall determine a State average per
25 beneficiary amount for each State which shall

1 be equal to the Secretary's estimate of the aver-
2 age amount of expenditures under the original
3 medicare fee-for-service program under parts A
4 and B for the year for a beneficiary enrolled
5 under such parts that resides in the State.

6 “(B) NATIONAL AVERAGE PER BENE-
7 FICIARY AMOUNT.—Each year (beginning in
8 2001), the Secretary shall determine the na-
9 tional average per beneficiary amount which
10 shall be equal to the average of the State aver-
11 age per beneficiary amounts determined under
12 subparagraph (B) for the year.

13 “(3) APPLICABLE PAYMENTS DEFINED.—In
14 this section, the term ‘applicable payments’ means
15 payments made to entities and individuals for items
16 and services provided under the original medicare
17 fee-for-service program under parts A and B to
18 beneficiaries enrolled under such parts that reside in
19 the State.

20 “(c) BENEFICIARIES HELD HARMLESS.—The provi-
21 sions of this section shall not effect—

22 “(1) the entitlement to items and services of a
23 beneficiary under this title, including the scope of
24 such items and services; or

1 “(2) any liability of the beneficiary with respect
2 to such items and services.

3 “(d) REGULATIONS.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consulta-
5 tion with the Medicare Payment Advisory Commis-
6 sion, shall promulgate regulations to carry out this
7 section.

8 “(2) PROTECTING RURAL COMMUNITIES.—In
9 promulgating the regulations pursuant to paragraph
10 (1), the Secretary shall give special consideration to
11 rural areas.

12 “(e) BUDGET NEUTRALITY.—The Secretary shall en-
13 sure that the provisions contained in this section do not
14 cause the estimated amount of expenditures under this
15 title for a year to increase or decrease from the estimated
16 amount of expenditures under this title that would have
17 been made in such year if this section had not been en-
18 acted.”.

19 **SEC. 3. IMPROVING FAIRNESS OF PAYMENTS FOR PHYSI-**
20 **CIANS’ SERVICES UNDER THE MEDICARE**
21 **FEE-FOR-SERVICE PROGRAM.**

22 (a) ADJUSTMENT TO GEOGRAPHIC INDICES UNDER
23 THE PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE.—Section 1848(e)(1) of
24 the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(e)(1)) is
25 amended—

1 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “(B) and
2 (C)” and inserting (B), (C), and (D)” in the matter
3 preceding clause (i);

4 (2) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as sub-
5 paragraph (E); and

6 (3) by adding after subparagraph (C) the fol-
7 lowing new subparagraph:

8 “(D) FLOOR AND CEILING ON GEO-
9 GRAPHIC INDICES.—If any index established
10 under clause (i), (ii), or (iii) of subparagraph
11 (A) or under subparagraph (B), after applica-
12 tion of the second sentence of subparagraph
13 (C), is—

14 “(i) less than 0.950, the Secretary
15 shall increase such index to 0.950; and

16 “(ii) greater than 1.05, the Secretary
17 shall reduce such index to 1.05.”.

18 (b) BUDGET NEUTRALITY ADJUSTMENT FOR APPLI-
19 CATION OF FLOOR AND CEILING ON GEOGRAPHIC AD-
20 JUSTMENT.—Section 1848(d) of the Social Security Act
21 (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(d)) is amended—

22 (1) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking “The con-
23 version” and inserting “Subject to paragraph (5),
24 the conversion”; and

1 (2) by adding at the end the following new
2 paragraph:

3 “(5) BUDGET NEUTRALITY ADJUSTMENT
4 FOR APPLICATION OF FLOOR AND CEILING ON
5 GEOGRAPHIC ADJUSTMENT.—Before applying
6 an update for a year under this subsection, the
7 Secretary shall (if necessary) provide for an ad-
8 justment to the conversion factor for that year
9 to ensure that the aggregate payments under
10 this part in that year shall be equal to aggre-
11 gate payments that would have been made
12 under such part in that year if subsection
13 (e)(1)(D) had not been enacted.”.

14 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
15 this section shall apply to payments for items and services
16 provided on and after January 1, 2002.

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