

1 State of Arkansas
2 82nd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 1999

SCR 15

4
5
6
7

By: Senator Bearden

8 **SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

9 "REQUESTING CONGRESS TO REFORM THE INTERIM PAYMENT
10 SYSTEM PROVISIONS OF THE MEDICARE PROGRAM CONCERNING
11 HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES. "

12
13 **Subtitle**

14 "REQUESTING CONGRESS TO REFORM THE
15 INTERIM PAYMENT SYSTEM PROVISIONS OF THE
16 MEDICARE PROGRAM CONCERNING HOME HEALTH
17 CARE SERVICES. "

18
19

20 WHEREAS, the Arkansas General Assembly is concerned about the health and
21 well-being of our elderly and disabled residents who now rely on the Medicare
22 program to meet the cost of their health care needs; and

23 WHEREAS, Arkansas, like most other states throughout the country,
24 anticipates an increasing population of senior and disabled citizens and
25 others requiring health care services; and

26 WHEREAS, the Arkansas General Assembly recognizes that our residents
27 should have access to high quality, cost-effective home health care services
28 through the Medicare program wherever feasible and justified; and

29 WHEREAS, the federal Balanced Budget Act of 1997 included significant
30 Medicare payment reforms affecting coverage in payment of home health care
31 services which create significant risks that access to Medicare home health
32 care services will be diminished or eliminated because of the payment reform;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, the federal Balanced Budget Act of 1997 bases rates on 1993
35 levels of care, fails to recognize changes in health needs and services since
36 1993 and fails to adequately account for the wide variation in care needs by

1 individual patients; and

2 WHEREAS, Medicare beneficiaries who need care the most are at the
3 greatest risk of cutbacks and are being denied access to care as the result of
4 payment reforms which discourage home health care agencies caring for patients
5 with high-care needs that have high costs; and

6 WHEREAS, the cutback of home health care services will lead to increased
7 use of more costly settings such as emergency rooms, hospitals, and nursing
8 homes as well as shifting an enormous burden to American families, especially
9 women who are primary care givers to most homebound patients; and

10 WHEREAS, home health care agencies are an important source of employment
11 in the state's communities, and cuts required under the new Medicare payment
12 system have already caused our citizens a loss of employment; and

13 WHEREAS, Medicare home health care cuts have already shifted service
14 needs and costs to the state's Medicaid programs, especially nursing home
15 care, resulting in an unfunded mandate to Arkansas; and

16 WHEREAS, the portion of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 calling for an
17 Interim Payment System was based on financial projections which overestimated
18 the continued growth of home care and therefore the provisions are not needed
19 to slow the growth of home health care;

20

21 NOW THEREFORE,

22 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
23 STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

24

25 That the Senate and House of Representatives of the Arkansas General
26 Assembly respectfully request the Congress of the United States to reform the
27 Interim Payment System of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and to work jointly
28 with the Health Care Finance Administration to develop the necessary
29 amendments or changes in rules in a manner which does not further disrupt,
30 interrupt or eliminate services to Medicare home health beneficiaries who need
31 care to stay home safely.

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon the adoption of this amendment the
33 Secretary of the Senate shall forward an authenticated copy hereof to the
34 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House
35 of Representatives, each member of Congress elected from this State and the
36 Administrator of the federal Health Care Finance Administration.