



LAWS & LEGISLATION

Fixing Medicare Coverage: Chiropractic Act Reintroduced

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

The U.S. House of Representatives has reintroduced ground-breaking bipartisan legislation that would expand chiropractic coverage within Medicare. Rep. Brian Higgins (D-N.Y.) introduced the Chiropractic Coverage Modernization Act (H.R. 2654) on April 19, 2021. The act's purpose and language mirror the original legislation, introduced in 2019, in that H.R. 2654 would "amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare coverage for all physicians' services furnished by doctors of chiropractic within the scope of their license."

According to the American Chiropractic Association, which has advocated for the coverage change in Congress and played a key role in introducing the original legislation as well, H.R. 2654 "would increase Medicare coverage of services provided by doctors of chiropractic within the full extent of their state licensure, enabling chiropractic patients to conveniently and safely access additional covered services that may be medically necessary. The change would also align Medicare with chiropractic coverage offered in many private health and Medicare Advantage plans."



As all chiropractors who treat Medicare patients know all too well, Medicare currently only reimburses doctors of chiropractic for a single service under Medicare Part B: "manual manipulation of the spine ... if medically necessary to correct a subluxation. Medicare doesn't cover other services or tests a chiropractor orders, including X-rays, massage therapy, and acupuncture."

Ninety-two co-sponsors ultimately signed on to the 2019 legislation (H.R. 3654); thus far, 19 congressional members have signed on as original co-sponsors to the 2021 legislation. As of press time, H.R. 2654 has been referred to both the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and House Committee on Ways and Means. To track the progress of H.R. 2654, visit www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2654/actions?r=4&s=1.

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