

Boyda Votes to Block \$70 Million in Cuts to Kansas Hospitals

Press Release

By: Nancy Boyda

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Nancy Boyda (Kansas Second District) yesterday joined a bipartisan majority of the U.S. House of Representatives to approve H.R. 3668, a sweeping health care bill that will block \$70 million in Medicare cuts to Kansas hospitals over the next five years.

The bill limits implementation of a Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) rule that is scheduled to take effect at the end of September. The proposed regulation would burden pharmacies and hospitals with a series of crippling new restrictions, most notably a "behavioral offset" that reduces all Medicare hospital reimbursements by 2.4% to counterbalance the cost of fraudulent medical claims.

"Imagine if a teacher gave a test and docked everyone's grade by five points on the assumption that, probably, someone would cheat," Rep. Boyda explained. "That's just not right. Medicare fraud is a real problem, but the solution is to catch and punish the cheaters, not to penalize hospitals that play by the rules."

In June, Rep. Boyda joined over half of her House colleagues to sign a letter requesting that CMS remove the behavioral offset provision from their proposed new payment regulations. On July 12, the U.S. House passed 412-12 an amendment to the CMS funding bill that would have blocked implementation of the new payment system, including the behavioral offset, for one year.

Despite these Congressional actions, CMS scheduled their proposed reimbursement cuts to take effect on September 30. Yesterday's bill would limit implementation of the cuts.

Tom Bell, president of the Kansas Hospital Association, said, "We applaud Congresswoman Nancy Boyda for taking a leadership role in opposing this misguided policy. Congress' action will restore nearly \$25 million over the next two years and nearly \$70 million over the next five years to Kansas community hospitals."

Rep. Boyda added, "In so many rural Kansas communities, hospitals are the front-line providers of health care. By preventing these cuts to Kansas hospitals, Congress is protecting our access to high-quality health care."

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