

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Lawmakers Seek To Postpone End Of Some Telehealth Options

Keep an eye on legislation that would extend telehealth flexibilities through 2024, regardless of when the COVID-19 public health emergency ends.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Advancing Telehealth Beyond COVID-19 Act (H.R. 4040) July 27. The bill "provides that certain flexibilities continue to apply until December 31, 2024, if the emergency period ends before that date," according to its legislative summary. Those flexibilities include "use of telehealth to conduct face-to-face encounter prior to recertification of eligibility for hospice care," according to the bill text.

"The bill gives Congress, Medicare, and stakeholders time to produce a permanent policy with any necessary program integrity measures and benefit qualifications on a complex set of issues," National Association for Home Care & Hospice President **William Dombi** says in the trade group's newsletter. "For home health and hospice, it preserves, at least temporarily, the very valuable option of telehealth visits to meet the face-to-face encounter requirements under the respective benefits," Dombi notes.



"This legislation brings us one step closer to permanently expanding telehealth services and allowing Americans to continue to access critical health care from the comfort of their home," Rep. **Debbie Dingell** (D-Mich.) says in a release.

"Our hope is that the flexibilities afforded during the public health emergency will be made permanent. This legislation offers an important step in that direction," says American Medical Association President **Jack Resneck Jr.** in the release. "We urge the Senate to act on this bipartisan bill, and for the Congress to build on this success," says Resneck, a physician.

