

News Release

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U.S. HOUSE VOTES TO BLOCK MEDICARE RECIPIENTS FROM ACCESS TO
OVER 200 OF AMERICA'S BEST AND SAFEST HOSPITALS.

Lobbyists for corporate hospitals sneak prohibition
on to Mental Health Parity Bill notes PHA.

(Washington, D.C.) – In a stunning move, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to prevent America's Medicare recipients from being admitted to some of the Nation's best and safest hospitals.

By a narrow margin, lobbyists for corporate hospital chains and other large hospitals were able to alter what was supposed to be the long-awaited passage of a Mental Health Parity bill.

Officials from Physician Hospitals of America (PHA), the professional association representing physician operated hospitals and surgical facilities, believe most House members did not know the impact of their vote.

"It is hard to imagine that during an election year any member of Congress would consciously vote to take away the right of Medicare recipients to choose the best and safest hospital available," said Sandvig. "We are hopeful that this sneak attack on seniors and physicians will be stripped off when the legislation is in Conference Committee."

The addition of Section 6 to HR 1424 would prevent the Federal Medicare program from paying for surgery or other hospital care for Senior Citizens if they choose to go to a hospital operated by physicians, not bureaucrats or administrators without medical training.

Currently physician operated hospitals are rated among the best and safest facilities in the country. And a recent investigation by Forbes magazine noted that the smaller, physician operated hospitals consistently have the lowest rates of hospital acquired infections.

Sandvig said that comments from both Democrats and Republicans seemed

to indicate that House and Senate conferees are already looking at stripping off the lobbyist's amendment in order to ensure passage of Mental Health Parity.

"Frankly, what the big hospital chains and their lobbyists did was shameful," said Sandvig," but at least they have come out of the shadows and confirmed that they are more interested in making money than what's good for patients and physicians."

Physician Hospitals of America has set up a toll-free telephone number so that citizens can contact their Representatives and Senators in Washington. The phone number is 1-800-977-1902.

PHA on the web at: <http://www.physicianhospitals.org/>

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