



Could Legislation Hurt Specialty Hospitals?

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You might have seen ads in the paper this week urging you to call your Congressman. It's over fears that legislation could hurt physician-run hospitals. 150 hospitals across the country - 11 in Kansas - could be impacted.

The ad was placed by a group called Physician Hospitals of America and it is running nation-wide, warning people that smaller, specialty hospitals could be in trouble.

"Reducing the capacity of the health care system is not the answer," said Tom Schmitt, CEO of Kansas Spine Hospital.

It's a piece of legislation gaining a lot of attention on Capitol Hill and in the medical community.

"There's a bill quietly winding it's way through Congress that would restrict access to facilities like ours and others in the state of Kansas and many in the country," said Schmitt.

It's a law involving a Medicare package...And wording in that legislation that could restrict physician run and owned hospitals from providing care in certain areas.

"Like any other industry, the large patient hospitals have a real monopoly on patient care," said Molly Sandvig, Executive Director for Physician Hospitals of America.

The law passed through the House in July, but has yet to be discussed in the Senate.

Physician Hospitals of America has already launched a nation-wide campaign urging people to tell their legislators to make sure these smaller, specialty hospitals don't get the

cold shoulder.

"We need to have these hospitals. It's a choice we'd like to be able to make as patients," said Sandvig.

Nearly a dozen specialty hospitals in Kansas would be impacted. Everything from the Kansas Spine Hospital, to the Kansas City Orthopedic Institute.

"I think being in a specialty hospital, I'm getting better care," said Leslie Miller, a patient at Kansas Spine Hospital.

Physician Hospitals of America says it all comes down to competition, but just who will win is an answer that Congress has yet to answer.

A spokeswoman for Kansas Senator Pat Roberts told us that he is against these hospital cuts. The law involving this Medicare package was scheduled to hit the Senate floor Wednesday, but has been postponed.