



Medicare Advocacy Recovery Coalition

MARC Coalition Supports Introduction in the Senate of the Strengthening Medicare and Repaying Taxpayers (SMART) Act – S. 1718

Proposed legislation produces wins for Medicare beneficiaries, the Medicare Trust Fund and businesses resolving claims.

Coalition applauds Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Rob Portman (R-OH) for their bipartisan leadership.

October 19, 2011 (WASHINGTON, DC) – The Medicare Advocacy Recovery Coalition (MARC) today announced its support for **The Strengthening Medicare and Repaying Taxpayers (SMART) Act - S. 1718**. U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio) are leading a bipartisan effort that includes U.S. Senators Ben Nelson (D- Neb.) and Richard Burr (R-N.C.) to make the Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) Program more efficient and cost effective to taxpayers. The SMART Act will significantly improve the efficiency of the current Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) system and speed repayment of amounts owed from Medicare beneficiary claims directly to the Medicare Trust Fund.

“The SMART Act will create a more streamlined MSP system, which will save taxpayer resources during these tight fiscal times” said Roy Franco, Co-Chair of MARC and representing the MSP efforts of Safeway. “Today, Medicare beneficiaries and third parties have significant problems settling claims, because they cannot find out how much money has to be repaid to Medicare. These unnecessary problems cause settlements to be needlessly delayed and waste limited taxpayer, business, and judicial resources. The current MSP system is also confusing Medicare beneficiaries, the most vulnerable of our population. Unfortunately, these many problems are actually limiting the return of dollars owed to the Medicare Trust Fund,” says Franco.

“MARC applauds Senator Wyden and Senator Portman for introducing this legislation,” said Dean Pappas, Co-Chair of MARC and Vice President & Assistant General Counsel for Federal Affairs with Allstate Insurance Company. “The Senators’ efforts to advance the SMART Act demonstrates the bi-partisan cooperation needed to streamline the current system and bring good government to the MSP repayment process. The improvements proposed in the SMART Act will benefit Medicare recipients, businesses large and small, and the Medicare Trust Fund. We strongly encourage other lawmakers to follow their lead and to co-sponsor the SMART Act,” said Pappas.

The SMART Act was also introduced in the House of Representatives this spring by Congressmen Tim Murphy (R-PA-18) and Ron Kind (D-WI-3). The SMART Act enjoys strong, bipartisan support, and has been endorsed by a broad variety of stakeholders, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National League of Cities, the nation's leading insurers, and retailers and other businesses large and small nationwide. In addition, the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing in June 2011 to highlight problems in the current MSP system and the need for reform efforts.

The Strengthening Medicare and Repaying Taxpayers (SMART) Act, - S. 1718 will create a more efficient and effective system for all involved by:

- Allowing parties to settle claims and reimburse the Trust Fund faster by obtaining from the Government the amount of Medicare repayments owed *before* settlement, rather than afterward.
- Fixing the onerous reporting process, eliminating the need for companies to collect customers' Social Security numbers in order to report payments (as the Agency requires today).
- Including other important benefits, such as a threshold set to ensure the Government does not spend more on collecting small claims than it stands to recover.

"Enactment of the SMART Act will produce a triple win. Medicare beneficiaries will be able to settle claims, companies will be able to resolve disputes faster and more efficiently, and the Medicare Trust Fund will be repaid quicker and more efficiently," says Franco.

About MARC:

The Medicare Advocacy Recovery Coalition (MARC) advocates for the improvement of the Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) program for beneficiaries and affected companies. The Coalition collaborates and develops strategic alliances with Congressional leaders and government agencies to focus on implementation of MSP reporting and on the broader issue of MSP reform. MARC's membership represents virtually every sector of the MSP regulated community including attorneys, brokers, insureds, insurers, insurance and trade associations, self-insureds and third-party administrators. For more information on MARC, please visit www.marccoalition.com.

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