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Medicare secondary payer bill would ease employer burden: Coalition

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WASHINGTON—Legislation introduced in the U.S. House would streamline the Medicare secondary payer system, according to a coalition of employers, insurers and third-party administrators.

Section 111 of the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 requires insurers, employers, and other entities to notify the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services when any workers compensation, liability or no-fault claim that has a medical component also involves Medicare-eligible beneficiaries.

The legislation introduced Monday, H.R. 1063, would help parties to settle claims faster by allowing them to obtain government information about the amount of Medicare payments owed before settling a workers comp case rather than after a settlement, the Washington-based Medicare Advocacy Recovery Coalition said in a statement.

Among other provisions, the bill would improve an “onerous reporting process” by eliminating a requirement that companies collect claimants’ Social Security numbers to report payments, MARC said. The legislation also would set a threshold amount for reporting a claim to ensure that the government does not spend more money collecting small claims than it would recover.

Reps. Tim Murphy, R-Pa., and Ron Kind, D-Wis., introduced the Strengthening Medicare and Repaying Taxpayers Act, or SMART Act, which has been referred to committee.

Supporters of reforming the Medicare secondary payer system introduced similar legislation last year but failed to win passage.