

Urgent Care Association
urgentcareassociation.org
877-698-2262

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2024

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Samantha Wulff, Communications Director
Urgent Care Association
swulff@urgentcareassociation.org
630-657-6116

House Members Urge CMS to Adjust FY 2025 Physician Fee Schedule, Encourage Urgent Care Use

In a bipartisan effort, 26 members of the United States House urged the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to examine policy alternatives that will enhance community quality of care, decrease the delays in emergency departments and optimize the use of Urgent Care centers by Medicare and Medicaid recipients.

Representatives are asking CMS to expand knowledge and access to Urgent Care centers (UCCs). Specifically, they are requesting to include FY 2025 Physician Fee Schedule policies that encourage Medicare beneficiaries and Medicaid enrollees to utilize UCCs for non-emergent, Urgent Care needs. CMS officials are being asked to provide a staff-level briefing for the members signed on to the letter detailing the policy options within six months of receiving the letter, to help ensure forward progress.

Why it's important: In 2022, patients spent an average of 2 hours, 40 minutes in emergency rooms, up from 2 hours 18 minutes in 2014.¹ Overcrowded emergency departments lead to staff burnout, poor outcomes, high costs, and errors. UCCs can help by treating non-emergency patients in a more appropriate setting. Many studies support this approach: A 2019 report found that one-third of nonurgent emergency department claims could be handled in an UCC at a third of the cost². Another 2019 study found that half of the 137 million annual ED visits could be shifted to a less-emergent facility.³

The letter is led by Ann Kuster (D-NH), Brad Schneider (D-IL), Darin LaHood (R-IL) and Michael Burgess (R- TX) and signed by 26 Members of Congress.

Signatures include: Ann Kuster (D-NH-02), Bradley Schneider (D-IL-10), Darin LaHood (R-IL-16), Michael Burgess (R-TX-26), Don Bacon (R-NE-02), Aaron Bean (R-FL-04), Vern Buchanan (R-FL-16), Sean Casten (D-IL-6), Juan Ciscoman (D-AZ-06), Donald Davis (D-NC-01), Debbie Dingell (D-MI-06), Charles Fleischmann (R-TN-03), Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR), Garret Graves (R-LA-06), Andy Harris (R-MD-01), Kevin Kiley (R-CA-03), Carol Miller (R-WV-01), Chris Pappas (D-NH-01), Deborah Ross (D-NC-02), Steve Scalise (R-LA-01), Adrian Smith (R-NE-03), Jill Tokuda (D-HI-02), Paul Tonko (D-NY-20), David Trone (D-MD-06), Jefferson Van Drew (R-NJ-02) and Joe Wilson (R-SC-02).

The official press release from Representative Kuster's office can be read [here](#).

¹ <https://www.axios.com/2023/09/15/hospital-er-visit-time-length>

² https://www.medpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/import_data/scrape_files/docs/default-source/reports/jun19_ch11_medpac_reporttocongress_sec.pdf

³ https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25428/w25428.pdf