



**American  
Academy of  
Home Care  
Physicians**



For Immediate Release: June 30, 2010  
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## **MARKEY AND WYDEN CALL UPON CMS TO IMPLEMENT INDEPENDENCE AT HOME IMMEDIATELY; IAH WILL REDUCE COSTS AND IMPROVE HEALTH CARE FOR CHRONICALLY ILL**

The first ever "Independence at Home" day was celebrated June 29 from 8:30-10 am in the US Capitol Visitor Center. IAH sponsors Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), Representative Ed Markey (D-PA), and key staffers Mark Bayer and Emily Katz received awards from the American Academy of Home Care Physicians, who also recognized the efforts of the 33 member IAH coalition.

Calling IAH "the future of healthcare," the Senator and Congressman released a letter to CMS asking the agency to implement the IAH demonstration "as soon as practicable". Senator Wyden further stated that the IAH demo should be implemented within 6 months and ultimately should be available "in every corner of the country". Later in the day, a CMS spokesman acknowledged that they had received the letter from the Senator and Congressman and would be implementing the Independence at Home Demonstration as soon as possible. See "Medicare Vows to Launch Homecare Demo 'As Quickly as Possible,' The Hill Healthwatch (June 29, 2010).

The letter from the Senator and the Congressman explains that the IAH program focuses on improving care and reducing expenditures for the highest cost Medicare beneficiaries – those individuals with multiple chronic diseases who account for up to 85 percent of Medicare spending and who have the worst outcomes-- , and is based on hundreds of established successful programs operating across the country, and can be implemented immediately through more than 70 experienced organizations that have expressed an interest in participating in the demonstration project. The letter further states that the IAH approach reduces preventable hospitalizations and hospital readmissions, reduces emergency room visits, and improves health outcomes commensurate with the beneficiaries' stage of chronic illness while achieving increased beneficiary and family caregiver satisfaction.

For the complete letter, [click here](#).

Independence at Home day also featured new data provided by Dr. Thomas Edes on 9500-16,000 patients in the Veterans' Administration's IAH-like Home-Based Primary Care program in 2006 and 2009 that showed that the HBPC program produced the following outstanding results: VA hospital bed days of care were reduced by 60%, VA nursing home bed days of care were reduced by 90%, and Combined Medicare and VA total costs were reduced 13.4% (after taking into account the cost of the HBPC program). See <http://www.iahnow.com/IAHcostsavings.htm> for nine other illustrations of IAH cost savings. The HBPC program has operated for more than 30 years and currently operates at more than 200 locations in virtually every state and the District of Columbia.

Independence at Home Day opened with Academy Board member Jim Pyles' introductory remarks describing that the current Medicare fee-for-service systems produces poor outcomes for those with multiple chronic illnesses, leading to unnecessary suffering and high costs, and that we can, and must, do better in a reformed health care delivery system. Lynn Feinberg of the National Partnership for Women and Families spoke of the desperate need chronically ill Medicare beneficiaries have for the IAH program and how our nation's frail elders deserve better health care than they receive under the current costly and wasteful system. Suzanne Mintz of the Family Caregiver Alliance, spoke of the importance of the IAH program to support of family caregivers who need help to provide better more cost effective care for chronically ill loved ones. Dr. George Taler then showed a brief video of the successful IAH-style program at the Washington Hospital Center that he founded more than a decade ago. Dr. Peter Boling spoke about the successful IAH-style program at the Medical College of Virginia. Senator Wyden and Congressman Markey urged attendees to fight for IAH, as it will improve care, reduce costs, and create technology-related jobs.

Dr. Edes then presented awards from the Academy to Congressman Markey and Senator Wyden for their extraordinary efforts and leadership in getting the Independence at Home program enacted with bipartisan support. Academy awards were also given to Mark Bayer, Legislative Director for Congressman Markey and Emily Katz, Legislative Assistant for Senator Wyden.

For more information about IAH and demonstration projects, see [www.IAHnow.com](http://www.IAHnow.com).

Since 1988, the American Academy of Home Care Physicians has served the needs of thousands of physicians and related professionals and agencies interested in improving care of patients in the home. For more information, see [www.aahcp.org](http://www.aahcp.org).