

112th CONGRESS
2d Session
H. R. 5943
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 8, 2012

A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the `Rural Hospital Access Act of 2012'.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF THE MEDICARE-DEPENDENT HOSPITAL (MDH) PROGRAM.

(a) Extension of Payment Methodology- Section 1886(d)(5)(G) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(G)) is amended--

- (1) in clause (i), by striking `October 1, 2012' and inserting `October 1, 2013'; and
- (2) in clause (ii)(II), by striking `October 1, 2012' and inserting `October 1, 2013'.

(b) Conforming Amendments-

(1) EXTENSION OF TARGET AMOUNT- Section 1886(b)(3)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(b)(3)(D)) is amended--

- (A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking `October 1, 2012' and inserting `October 1, 2013'; and
- (B) in clause (iv), by striking `through fiscal year 2012' and inserting `through fiscal year 2013'.

(2) PERMITTING HOSPITALS TO DECLINE RECLASSIFICATION- Section 13501(e)(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1395ww note) is amended by striking `through fiscal year 2012' and inserting `through fiscal year 2013'.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF THE INCREASED PAYMENTS UNDER THE MEDICARE LOW-VOLUME HOSPITAL PROGRAM.

Section 1886(d)(12) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(12)) is amended--

- (1) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking `2013' and inserting `2014';
- (2) in subparagraph (C)(i), by striking `and 2012' each place it appears and inserting `, 2012, and 2013'; and

(3) in subparagraph (D), by striking `and 2012' and inserting `, 2012, and 2013'.

SEC. 4. GAO STUDY AND REPORT ON MEDICARE-DEPENDENT HOSPITAL AND LOW-VOLUME HOSPITAL PROGRAMS.

(a) Study-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the following programs under title XVIII of the Social Security Act under which certain small, rural hospitals or small hospitals receive add-on payments for inpatient hospital services furnished to individuals entitled to benefits under part A of title XVIII of the Social Security Act or enrolled under part B of such title:

(A) MDH PROGRAM- The Medicare-dependent, small rural hospital (MDH) program for a small, rural hospital that meets the criteria of section 1886(d)(5)(G)(iv) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(G)(iv)), hereinafter in this section referred to as an `MDH hospital'.

(B) LOW-VOLUME HOSPITAL PROGRAM- The low-volume hospital program for a small hospital with fewer than 1,600 discharges annually that meets the criteria of section 1886(d)(12)(C)(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(12)(C)(i)), hereinafter in this section referred to as a `low-volume hospital'.

(2) MATTERS STUDIED- The study under paragraph (1) shall include an examination and analysis of the following:

(A) COST COMPARISON AMONG HOSPITALS- How operating and capital costs of MDH hospitals and low-volume hospitals, respectively, compare to such costs of other subsection (d) hospitals (as defined in section 1886(d)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(1)(B))) that participate in the Medicare program under title XVIII of such Act.

(B) IMPACT OF ADD-ON PAYMENTS ON HOSPITALS MARGINS- The impact of add-on payments under paragraphs (5)(G) and (12)(A), respectively, of section 1886(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)) on Medicare payment margins, as defined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, of MDH hospitals and low-volume hospitals, respectively, including whether the absence of such add-on payments would likely result in negative Medicare payment margins for such hospitals.

(b) Report to Congress- Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a). The report shall include the study findings and such recommendations, with respect to the MDH program and the low-volume hospital program described in subsection (a)(1), as the Comptroller General determines to be appropriate.