

NEWS

from the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists

Senator Wyden and Representative Markey Introduce the “Independence at Home” Act

(Alexandria, VA—May 22, 2009) The American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) today announced its endorsement of the “Independence at Home” Act. The bill was introduced by US Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) of the Senate Special Committee on Aging and US Representative Ed Markey (D-MA), co-chairman of the Bi-Partisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer’s disease and senior member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

The bill creates a pilot program to bring primary care medical services to Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions in their homes. It will offer incentives for providing patients with care options that offer greater independence and quality of life while reducing costs. Pilot programs will be set up in 26 states and has attracted bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, including: Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Ben Cardin (D- MD), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ).

ASCP Director of Policy & Advocacy Claudia Schlosberg, JD, stated in ASCP’s letter of support for this legislation, “We are especially delighted that the bill recognizes the medication-related problems in the elderly and the valuable role of the pharmacist in correcting them.”

This piece of legislation is particularly groundbreaking for ASCP because it recognizes the [Commission for Certification in Geriatric Pharmacy \(CCGP\)](#) as the standard for demonstrating knowledge and expertise in geriatric pharmacotherapy.

Provisions focusing on medication-related issues in older adults and pharmacists include:

- Establishing a three-year Medicare pilot project in 26 states using a patient-centered health care delivery model to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions can remain independent for as long as possible in a comfortable environment.

- Providing for coordinated-care programs that create teams of health care professionals, including physicians, nurses, physicians' assistants, and other providers. These programs will be supplemented by care- coordination services including Medication Therapy Management services provided by pharmacists with geriatric certification. The health care team will work together to manage complex disease states and keep the patient healthy within the comfort of their home.
- Generating savings by providing better care to Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic conditions and reducing duplicative and unnecessary services, hospitalization, and other health care costs. Geriatric patients are at high risk medication-related problems and proper care and disease state management will help to reduce the costs to the care. The program will utilize the services of healthcare professionals with geriatric specializations to properly manage the patients and prevent costly trips to the emergency room because of poorly managed disease states.

The American Society of Consultant Pharmacists, the recognized expert in geriatric pharmacotherapy, is the international professional society devoted to optimal medication management and improved health outcomes for all older persons. ASCP's 7,000 members serve individuals residing in a variety of environments, including nursing facilities, sub acute care and assisted living facilities, psychiatric hospitals, and hospice programs, as well as in-home and community-based care. Visit ASCP's Web site at <http://www.ascp.com>.

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