

## Senators Eye Fast Tracking 5-Year Hospital At Home Bill

Jan 15, 2026, 5:05 PM EST

(Inside Health Policy)

A bill extending CMS' Acute Hospital Care at Home (AHCAH) waivers for five years is moving through an informal Senate process for quickly advancing legislation known as "hotlining," according to a Democratic aide and a lobbyist in communication with a Republican office. The aide said while the bill has not cleared the hotline process as of Thursday afternoon (Jan. 15), they had not heard any objections to the maneuver.

Sources did not say when the bill, the Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act, could finish going through the hotline process.

If a single senator objects to hotlining the bill, then it will have to go through normal Senate procedure.

But if no senator objects to hotlining the bill, then it will quickly pass the Senate. If the bill is the Senate version (S. 2237), then it would likely go through the conference committee to iron out differences between it and a version that passed the House in December (H.R. 4313), the lobbyist said. If the bill is the House's version, then it would likely go straight to President Donald Trump's desk for his signature without having to go to the conference committee.

The lobbyist said the bill currently going through the hotline is the House version.

Should senators advance the hospital-at-home bill, it would be a major victory for hospital-at-home programs which will have to scale back operations unless Congress extends AHCAH waivers before Jan. 30.

A long-term extension would preserve existing hospital-at-home programs and encourage health systems to launch new ones, advocates say.

The hospital-at-home bill passed the House on a bipartisan basis and the Senate version has four Democratic and three Republican sponsors according to congress.gov. --

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