

House Approps Again Prohibits HHS From Funding WISeR In Fiscal 2027 Spending Bill

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The House Appropriations Committee voted once again Tuesday (June 9) to keep HHS from spending appropriated funds on CMS' Medicare prior authorization model, with Democrats reiterating their concern about the controversial WISeR model's impact on patients and requesting CMS provide an update next year on how the model has impacted patients and how states are selected for participation.

The amendment comes after Senate Democrats escalated their fight on May 20 against WISeR by introducing a Congressional Review Act resolution that could force lawmakers to vote on whether to block the model. Earlier this year, a group of over 30 House Democrats urged the House Appropriations Committee to repeal the model and any similar demonstrations in the federal funding process.

The House Appropriations Committee adopted a provision like it did last year that would prohibit CMS from using Congress' appropriated funds on the Wasteful and Inappropriate Service Reduction (WISeR) model or any other model that implements prior authorization in traditional Medicare.

A second provision of the bipartisan manager's amendment for the 2027 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill reaffirms the committee's concern with the model, arguing it "may create burdens and delays for patients and providers," and requests CMS include a report on WISeR's impact in the administration's fiscal 2027 budget justification.

During a markup of the bill Tuesday, Rep. Lois Frankel (D-FL) said she worked with Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD) to include the WISeR spending restriction provision in the manager's amendment.

"This manager's amendment actually includes an extraordinary collaboration between Dr. Harris and myself," Frankel said. "I thank him. He's actually been the driving force here."

Frankel argued providers and beneficiaries alike are already seeing negative impacts from WISeR.

“Seniors are waiting longer for care, left in pain, uncertainty, and frustration [from] paperwork and artificial intelligence stays between them and treatment,” Frankel said. “And these are for treatments for seniors living with Parkinson's disease, sleep apnea, chronic pain, spinal conditions, diabetic wounds, and other serious illnesses, and a delay in treatment can mean a worsening illness, loss of independence, a trip to the hospital, or even the difference between life and death.”

Medicare Director Chris Klomp has admitted the WISeR model will need tweaks as the agency learns from mistakes, but has defended the model, saying it “is designed to absolutely make this construct invisible to the provider and the patient while appropriately managing costs, but in a highly targeted, highly surgical way, where it is no longer recognizable as it is today.” -- *Sigi Ris* (sris@iwpnews.com)