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Bill to make healthcare costs transparent advances, but hospitals don't seem too happy

By Ireland Owens

Ireland Owens is a reporter for The Center Square and contributor to the Daily Caller News Foundation.

(Daily Caller News Foundation) – Bipartisan hospital price transparency legislation cleared a key hurdle in the Senate Wednesday, but some big hospital groups are pushing back.

The [Patients Deserve Price Tags Act](#), led by Republican Kansas Sen. Roger Marshall and Democratic Colorado Sen. John Hickenlooper, would require U.S. hospitals and health insurers to publicly disclose medical care prices, [according](#) to a news release from Marshall's office. Though, the legislation has previously drawn [criticism](#) from some health organizations that claim it could place additional administrative burdens on hospitals and health systems.

"Patients deserve price tags, not surprise bills. This is the only bipartisan healthcare reform before Congress today that can begin lowering the cost of living immediately by bringing real competition to our healthcare system," Marshall said in a statement. "Americans have waited far too long to know what their care will cost before they receive it, and I'm proud this commonsense legislation passed out of the [Senate Health, Education Labor and Pensions] Committee today with overwhelming bipartisan support."

"It's time to put patients back in charge – not the big hospital systems and insurance companies," he continued.

Marshall's office did not respond to the Daily Caller News Foundation's request for comment.

The bill cleared the Senate committee 21-1 with Kentucky Republican Sen. Rand Paul as the sole nay vote.

"There's only a very small amount of this market that cares about this and these people don't have insurance," Paul said, the Center Square [reported](#). "When you mandate transparency on prices that are fixed, [it] doesn't change the situation."

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“Right now, Americans walk into a hospital blind and walk out with a bill nobody could have predicted. That’s not a health care system — it’s a gamble,” Hickenlooper said in a statement provided to the DCNF. “Our bill makes hospitals and insurers publish their prices and backs it up with real fines, not empty threats. If we’re serious about getting universal coverage and lowering costs, we start by following the money.”

The bill would mandate public reporting of negotiated rates, costs, and cash prices for medical services provided at hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, imaging centers and clinical labs, and would also “ensure group health plans have access to claims data and prevents third-party administrators from restricting data access,” per a July 17 [press release](#) from Marshall’s office.

Marshall also [claimed](#) during a Wednesday press conference that the bill could potentially “save families about \$1,000 a year.”

The American Hospital Association (AHA) issued a Tuesday [statement](#) warning that the bill may impose “unnecessary” administrative burdens on healthcare providers. However, the AHA emphasized that it shares the “goal of meaningful price transparency” in the U.S.

The legislation would amend Title XXVII of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act to “mandate that hospitals, insurers, laboratories, imaging providers and ambulatory surgical centers publicly disclose standard charges, discounted cash prices, payer-specific negotiated charges and ownership information in accessible formats,” per the AHA.

“While the manager’s amendment reflects meaningful changes, we continue to have serious concerns that the legislation does not yet sufficiently advance the goal of providing patients with clear, accurate healthcare price information in a manner that avoids unnecessary administrative burdens on providers,” the AHA’s statement says. “We remain committed to working with the committee to address these outstanding issues to find a path forward that achieves our shared goal of meaningful price transparency for patients while allowing hospitals and health systems to focus resources on patient care.

Title XXVII of the PHS Act “contemplates that states will exercise primary enforcement authority over health insurance issuers in the group and individual markets to ensure compliance with health insurance market reforms,” [according](#) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA) similarly critiqued the bill in an October 2025 [statement](#), claiming it may lead to “significant new administrative complexity” in the healthcare industry.

“While ASCA unequivocally supports transparency that enables patients to make informed decisions, the current legislative push risks imposing significant new administrative

complexity without delivering genuinely useful data to consumers,” according to the statement.

The ASCA also asserts that it “remains focused on promoting constructive transparency that truly benefits patients, while firmly opposing this and similar efforts that attempt to shift the entire burden of cost containment onto providers without holding payers accountable or addressing the root drivers of healthcare inflation.”

However, the bill has garnered public [support](#) from several advocacy groups. Save our States founder and executive director Trent England said in a Wednesday statement [posted](#) on X that the bipartisan legislation is “good for everyone except for a few hospital executives who directly benefit from overcharging patients.”

Meanwhile, United States of Care senior director of federal policy and advocacy Lisa Hunter said in a [statement](#) that Wednesday’s vote “is a win for people – and a clear signal that Congress is taking steps towards delivering on the transparency and accountability people have been demanding.”

Families USA Executive Director Anthony Wright said in a Wednesday [statement](#) that “for too long, big hospitals have skirted price transparency rules by posting estimates, algorithms, and opaque figures that obscure actual pricing.”

“The Patients Deserve Price Tags Act would end that abuse by requiring hospitals and other facilities to post prices in dollars and cents, without exception,” Wright added.

Now that the Patients Deserve Price Tags Act is [advancing](#) to the full Senate, it has to pass both chambers of Congress by Jan. 3, 2027, in order to become law.

President Donald Trump [issued](#) an executive order in February 2025 seeking to empower patients in the U.S. with “clear, accurate and actionable healthcare pricing information.”

A [PatientRightsAdvocate.org poll](#) released in May found that 96% of voters agree with the statement that Americans “deserve to know the price of their healthcare before they receive it.”

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