

To: AMEPA Members and Guests

EVERYONE READING THIS EMAIL NEEDS TO:

Please take 5 minutes, call the Capitol Hill Switchboard at

1-202-224-3121 and ask for your Senators office by name. Ask to speak with the Healthcare Legislative Assistant.

RESPECTFULLY ask the Legislative Assistant to please relay a message to the Senator:

- To Support H.R. 6331

- To Delay the Competitive Bidding in Home Medical Equipment

- To Repeal the Transfer of Ownership of Oxygen

You are also encouraged to send fax letters as well as have

everyone else affected by H.R. 6331 in the healthcare industry do the same. Including:

- **Physicians and their Staff**

- **Case Managers**

- **Respiratory Therapists**

- **Patients, their Caregivers and Guardians**

Additionally, AAHomecare has a link on their website to document complaints that patients, case managers, providers and physicians are having working under the new program. We encourage all providers to participate in this endeavor

[CLICK for AAHomecare's Feedback Form](#)

AMEPA News 7/08/08-

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- **Tennessee AMA and AARP Chapter push for H.R. 6331**

- **American Lung Association backs H.R. 6331**

Senator Helms Funeral Delays Senate Activity

Senate to pause for Helms funeral

From Politico.com

By Daniel W. Reilly - July 7, 2008, 03:21 PM,

The Senate will hold no votes on Tuesday to accommodate lawmakers attending the funeral of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who passed away on the Fourth of July.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid made the announcement on Monday, saying the chamber will delay a vote on controversial electronic surveillance legislation until Wednesday morning, to accommodate lawmakers journeying to Helms' home state of North Carolina.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday afternoon at the Hayes-Barton Baptist Church in Raleigh, where Helms was a longtime member.

Speaking on the Senate floor, Reid took time to remember Helms, saying he was surprised by how quickly he warmed to his Republican colleague, given Helms' controversial views on many issues.

“When I came to the Senate,” Reid said, “one of the last people that I was going to try and befriend was Jesse Helms. As a moderate Democrat, I found his views extreme.”

But Reid said he quickly grew to admire Helms for standing up for his beliefs, no matter the potential backlash.

"Whether or not you agreed with the senator from North Carolina, his sincerity and his views were remarkable," Reid said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said that "a significant number" of Senate Republicans are planning on attending the funeral and thanked Reid for accommodating their absences.

McConnell, who served with Helms for many years in the Senate, will deliver one of the eulogies at the service.

"If you took a poll around here of the people who work in the Capitol about who was the most popular member, I suspect Jesse Helms would have won it," McConnell said.

"[That] might surprise an awful lot of people in the press and out in America who thought of Senator Helms as a fierce individual. IN fact, in person, he was as gentle, as accommodating and as friendly as anybody I have ever met."

Tennessee Medical Association, AARP Urge Senators Alexander & Corker to Reconsider Position on Medicare Cuts

Provided by Southern Diabetic Supply Company - Memphis, TN

The following joint statement was issued today by the Tennessee Medical Association and the AARP of Tennessee:

Gridlock has paralyzed the U.S. Senate, derailing a critical bipartisan bill that would have stopped a 10.6-percent cut to doctors who treat Medicare patients, kept Medicare premiums fair, and made significant improvements to a program that 44 million Americans depend on.

Last week, Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker joined a minority of senators in voting to block legislation that would have helped people on Medicare maintain access to their doctors,

Written by Rob Brant

keep premiums fair and improve benefits for the most vulnerable, while boosting health care quality through national e-prescribing. The Senate vote on the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (H.R. 6331), which passed by a bipartisan landslide in the House of Representatives, was purposely scheduled for June 26 so it would become law before the cuts to doctor payments were to go into effect on July 1.

"We are deeply troubled that our senators - Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker - voted to block a bill with bipartisan support that would have preserved patients' access to their doctors and improved Medicare for the millions of Americans who depend on it," said AARP Tennessee Director Rebecca Kelly. "For the sake of older Americans, people with disabilities and military families, we urge Senators Alexander and Corker to listen to their constituents and reconsider their votes when the bill comes up again after the congressional recess."

In addition to preventing a 10-percent cut to reimbursements to doctors, the Medicare bill would have: helped keep premiums fair; strengthened protections for lower income beneficiaries; improved Medicare's coverage of preventive services; and made Medicare more efficient through electronic prescribing. The Senate is currently scheduled to reconsider H.R. 6331 immediately following the July 4 recess.

"Because of the stance our two senators took, the Senate went home for the July 4th recess leaving care for our nation's seniors, disabled individuals, and military families hanging in the balance," said Robert D. Kirkpatrick, MD, TMA's president. "We call on Senator Alexander and Senator Corker to reconsider their votes and return to Washington to do what's right - vote to ensure patient access to care and improve health security for 44 million Americans."

Throughout the debate on Medicare legislation, AARP, AMA, and the Tennessee Medical Association have engaged their members in the fight to keep Medicare fair and protect access to doctors for more than 1 million Tennesseans who count on Medicare for their health insurance. Hundreds of thousands of AARP supporters, including 14,602 in Tennessee, called and emailed Congress, signed petitions, wrote letters to their local papers, and participated in Keep Medicare Fair events around the country over the last several weeks. In addition, more than 41,000 patients and physicians called Congress in June through the AMA grassroots hotline, and the AMA is airing new radio and television ads that urge opponents of H.R. 6331 to put patients' access to care before insurance profits by voting for the bill as soon as they return to Washington from their holiday recess.

The Tennessee Medical Association is a 7,500-member professional organization for medical doctors dedicated to protecting the health interests of patients and enhancing the effectiveness of physicians throughout the state. To find out more about TMA programs and services, visit our Web site at www.medwire.org.

American Lung Association backs H.R. 6331

Urgent: Pulmonary Rehabilitation Bill to Be Voted On in the Senate!

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on the Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation bill this week as part of the larger medicare bill. The bill passed the House of Representatives by 355 to 59, last month. Please take a moment now and send a letter to your Senators, urging that they pass this legislation right away.

Every year, millions of Americans suffer from serious lung disease including many older adults who suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, is a chronic disease that has been diagnosed in 12.1 million adults. Pulmonary rehabilitation programs are scientifically proven to improve the health and well being of patients with COPD and other lung diseases.

Pulmonary rehabilitation is crucial for many COPD patients. It can help

reduce the impact of COPD and greatly improve the patient's quality of life. Pulmonary rehabilitation programs have also been shown to reduce health care costs by patients with COPD.

This important legislation will serve the health care needs of millions of Americans who suffer from COPD, helping to vastly improve their quality of life. Please take a moment to urge your Senators to pass the Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation Act!

Send a letter to the following decision maker(s): Your Senators
Below is the sample letter:

Subject: Please Pass Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation Act

Dear [decision maker name automatically inserted here],

I am writing to ask you to please support the Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation Act, which is currently part of a larger Medicare bill (HR 6331). This legislation will ensure that all Medicare beneficiaries will have access to vital therapeutic services for respiratory and cardiac disease.

Pulmonary rehabilitation programs are scientifically proven to improve the health and well being of patients with chronic lung disease, including COPD. These programs have also been shown to reduce health care costs by reducing health care utilization by patients with COPD.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD (which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis), is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. As of 2005, 12.1 million U.S. adults were diagnosed with COPD and an additional 12 million were believed to have the disease but were not yet clinically diagnosed. In 2004, over 118,000 people died of COPD.

On Tuesday, June 24th the U.S. House of Representatives passed this legislation with over 350 votes. Now is the time for the U.S. Senate to pass the Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation Act so that the millions who suffer from respiratory disease can get the help they need.