

(July 29, 2005) Lipinski Announces Bipartisan Hospital Price Reporting and Disclosure Legislation

Congressman Dan Lipinski Announces Bipartisan Hospital Price Reporting and Disclosure Legislation

Companion Senate Legislation to be Introduced Soon

WASHINGTON, DC - Today Congressman Dan Lipinski announced the recent introduction of legislation to empower health care consumers with information the Hospital Price Reporting and Disclosure Act of 2005. Pictured below, Congressman Lipinski is joined by Congressman Bob Inglis (R-SC) in introducing H.R. 3139, and will soon be joined by Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) who plan to introduce a companion bill in the Senate.

"This Hospital Price Disclosure Act would make health care price information for inpatient and outpatient procedures, as well as commonly administered medications, available to consumers on the Internet," Lipinski said.

By being able to compare different health care facilities on a consumer-friendly web site, Americans will have more control over and greater confidence in their health care decisions. The Hospital Price Disclosure Act would amend the Medicare regulations to mandate that hospitals regularly report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) the prices for the: 25 most commonly performed inpatient procedures; 25 most common outpatient procedures; and the 50 most frequently prescribed medications. HHS would then post the price information in on the Internet.

"As employees are spending more of their own money on health care services, they have a right to know how much different health care facilities charge for outpatient procedures," Rep. Lipinski said. "Informed consumers are a critical part of any long-term solution to address health care access and affordability. Health care decisions are just too important to be left to chance. Would anyone suggest that consumers make better purchasing decisions without price or performance comparisons? Of course not."

Also on hand was Senator Richard Durbin, who was there to announce a companion bill in the Senate.

"The Hospital Price Disclosure Act, which I have sponsored in the Senate, is a bipartisan effort to improve the consistency of hospital charges," Durbin said. "This legislation will offer important protections to American health care consumers. Illinois has already been a leader in this effort. The Illinois General Assembly passed legislation in 2003 requiring the Illinois Department of Public Health to publish hospital price and performance information on a state website. Now it is time to make this information available to consumers nationwide."

When consumers start comparing health care facilities on costs, the facilities will respond accordingly, driving costs down and quality up. Studies on programs like this on a state level, such as the one proposed in Illinois, demonstrate that making performance information public encourages quality improvement.

"We all want more facts at our disposal when making health care decisions for ourselves and our families. This legislation will help all health care consumers make better choices about where to seek inpatient and outpatient care," Congressman Lipinski said. "Each of us expects similar disclosures from an auto repair shop; it is time to demand the same from health care providers."