

**LEGISLATIVE DAY MAY 2, 2017**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**AAHAM Florida Urges Passage of Critical  
Medicare Observation Stay Legislation**

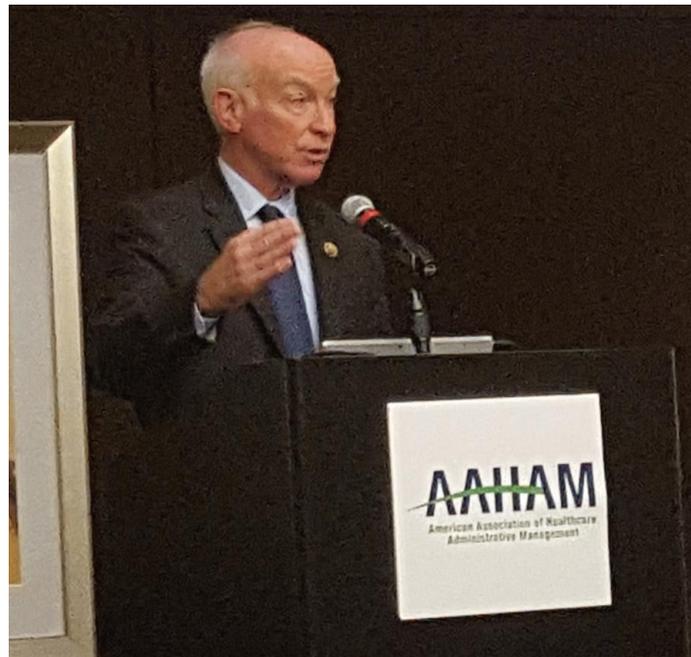
(Clearwater, FL 5-2-17)-- Local area business woman Marty Lassiter, President of the AAHAM Florida Sunshine Chapter, a healthcare compliance auditor, met with members of the Florida Congressional delegation in Washington to discuss the most critical issue impacting the healthcare professionals. In a one-day, American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management (AAHAM) sponsored conference on Capitol Hill, the Florida AAHAM delegates, and 100 plus hospital representatives from all across the country met with elected officials from the U.S. House of Representatives and United States Senate to discuss, among other issues, the need to work with the industry to pass critical legislation changing the way Medicare classifies patient's hospital stays. Under current rules, Medicare puts families and hospitals in difficult financial and procedural positions with its current Inpatient stay versus Observation stay status classifications.

Lassiter and her colleagues brought the issue before Florida's elected officials on Capitol Hill to ask their support for H.R. 1421 introduced by Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT) and S. 568 by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Susan Collins (R-ME), Bill Nelson (D-FL), and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV). This legislation would fix a problem that prevents Medicare beneficiaries who are hospitalized in Observation stays by requiring that Observation time be counted towards meeting the current three-day prior Inpatient stay requirement before admission into a skilled nursing facility.

The financial impact on all Medicare beneficiaries and hospitals is significant. The Medicare patients are caught in a Medicare billing issue. When Observation stays were enacted to handle short stay situations in the 1990's hospital stays were 13 days on average. The Observation stay would normally be 24 to 48 hours-short stays designed to reduce costs for the Medicare program. Today the average Medicare Inpatient stay is about 5.5 days. Use of Observation stays has more than doubled since 2006 because of Medicare's scrutiny of short Inpatient stays. This current reform act change is not a new benefit, rather it is addressing current patient needs, and timing requirements for the right level of care.

The "Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2017" is a bipartisan supported bill in the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The bills have broad support in the healthcare industry and by Medicare Advocates.

“It’s time to pass meaningful legislation that allows hospitals and doctors to provide the care they need to those who need it without having their hands tied by so many regulations that hinder this process.” Lassiter and her chapter members met with some of Washington's top policy-makers who will ultimately decide the fate of AAHAM’s legislative agenda. The list includes the office of Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Rubio, House Rep. Daniel Webster, office representatives of Rep. Dennis Ross, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Alcee Hastings, Rep. Gus Bilirakis, and Rep. Kathy Castor. Part of our Florida AAHAM members met Rep. Charlie Crist on the sidewalk; he took time to listen and ask about the bill we were supporting.



U.S. Representative Joe Courtney addressing AAHAM members. Courtney is one of the authors of the Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act Of 2017.



Pictured Linda Sayre, Marty Lassiter, Darlene Clemence, Sherri Andrews, and Charlie Bearham. Picture taker Deb Kelly



Marco Rubio's Office Ansley Rhyne-staffer, Charlie Bearham, Deb Kelly and Darlene Clemence



Linda Sayre, U.S. Rep. Daniel Webster, and Marty Lassiter



U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, Sherri Andres, Charlie Bearham, Darlene Clemence, Deb Kelly a chance meeting at Capitol Hill enjoying a beautiful day.



AAHAM NATIONAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The team who organized Legislative Day along with the AAHAM National Office. Left to Right Jose Guevarez, Amy Mitchell, Marty Lassiter, Left back Row: Richard Lovich, Scott Noel, Paul Miller, Richard Rogers, and Josh Johnson.

Hopefully our efforts to pass this vital legislation will gain momentum across the nation.

AAHAM members are doing the right thing at the right time.

Other Florida Members who came to Legislative Day were Jose Guevarez and Jon Levine.

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P.S. Support continues to grow as AAHAM members continue efforts to educate congressional offices on these important bills.