



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

August 29, 2018

The Honorable Jason Smith
United States House of Representatives
1118 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett
United States House of Representatives
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Smith and Doggett:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to support H.R. 6225, the Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 198,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

ASHA members work closely with other rehabilitation colleagues, including occupational therapists, in the home health setting to help patients remain in their homes while restoring or maintaining their functional abilities. The Medicare home health Part A benefit includes skilled nursing care, speech-language pathology services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, aide services, and medical social work for beneficiaries in their homes. Currently, the statute excludes occupational therapists, among others, from initiating a home health episode and conducting the initial comprehensive assessment. Excluding occupational therapists from this role creates a potential access issue when a patient has a primary need for occupational therapy. Allowing occupational therapists to initiate home health services would improve access to services for patients while not altering each specialty's scope of practice.

ASHA appreciates this opportunity to voice support for the Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Ingrida Lusic, ASHA's director of federal and political affairs, at ilusic@asha.org.

Sincerely,

Elise Davis-McFarland, PhD, CCC-SLP
2018 ASHA President