

6/22/2004 Moran Discusses Rural Health Care With Top Medicare Official

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Administrator Addresses Concerns About Reimbursements for Ambulance, Lab Services

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today met with the administrator the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Dr. Mark McClellan, during a meeting on Capitol Hill. Dr. McClellan was recently appointed by President Bush to lead the federal agency responsible for Medicaid and Medicare. The administrator and Moran discussed ways to improve Medicare reimbursements for hospitals, nursing homes, home-health care and ambulance services in rural areas.

"Access to affordable to health care is important to all Kansans, and Medicare reimbursements play a big part in determining what health care services are available across our state," Moran told Administrator McClellan. "As we work toward modernizing the Medicare system, we must make sure that Medicare payments to rural health care providers keep pace with the rising costs of health care."

During the hour-long meeting, Moran and Administrator McClellan discussed recent changes by CMS to end reimbursements to Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) for laboratory services, unless the patient is physically present in the hospital. In rural settings, laboratory specimens are often collected at health clinics, skilled nursing facilities and patients' homes. Moran and McClellan also talked about improving the reimbursements for ambulance services. Before the meeting, Moran contacted health care officials in the First District to make certain that their concerns were raised at the meeting.

"Because some patients must already travel great distances to see a doctor, we must make certain that our hospitals receive adequate Medicare reimbursement and are able to stay in business," Moran said. "Kansas communities can not afford to lose access to health care services."

Moran also encouraged McClellan to visit Kansas in the near future to learn more about Kansas hospitals and rural health care. Administrator McClellan was on Capitol Hill to meet with Moran and other members of the Rural Health Care Coalition.

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