

WASHINGTON, DC –“ Congressman Joe Courtney today sent a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), urging practical changes to new face-to-face reporting requirements for home health care services. The bipartisan letter is cosigned by 105 Members of Congress.

Beginning on April 1, 2011, CMS required that physicians document face-to-face encounters with patients in need of home health care services. While CMS has long required that providers certify a patient’s need of home health care through form 485, the “Physician Certification and Plan of Treatment,” the new regulation required a redundant, separate narrative for the face-to-face encounter.

“I have heard from doctors and home health professionals in Connecticut that failure to modify this rule will cause potentially life-threatening interruptions of critical care,” **said Congressman Courtney.** “The fix is simple, however, and with a large bipartisan group of cosigners, I urge CMS to make the necessary change.”

Courtney’s letter requests that a line be added on form 485 certifying a face-to-face encounter, in lieu of a new documentation form. The letter also requests that non-physician providers be allowed to document the face-to-face encounter, as long as a physician certifies the clinical findings.

“This is a great day for the millions of seniors who receive the valuable and cost saving services of home care,” **said Val J. Halamandaris, National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) president.** “This is an unprecedented show of bipartisan unity from 105 members of the House that have signed on to the letter circulated by Representatives Joe Courtney, Walter Jones, John Lewis and Linda Sanchez, showing that they have heard the medical community’s outcry over the arduous and redundant paperwork requirements from the face to face encounter requirement for Medicare recipients. We remain committed to working together with CMS and Congress to ensure program integrity while at the same time standing up against barriers to the important care that home health service provides vulnerable Americans.”

The full text of the letter is below and can be downloaded [here](#) .