

Congress Extends Key Telehealth and Digital Health Programs in Funding Bill

Digital Health

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On February 3, Congress was able to avert a government shutdown, in particular providing funding for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) which included digital health provisions and extensions of expired programs. The final funding bill included:

- a two-year extension of the telehealth waivers (through December 31, 2027),
- a delay of the in-person visit requirement for mental health services via telehealth for three years (through January 1, 2028),
- allow telehealth cardiopulmonary rehabilitation services through Jan 1, 2028,
- a five-year extension of the Hospital at Home program (through September 30, 2030), and require the hospital-at-home study be shared with Congress, and
- a three- year extension of the virtual diabetes prevention program (through December 31, 2029).

In addition to the extensions, the funding bill included provisions requiring providers use a telehealth modifier beginning January 1, 2027, and requires HHS issue guidance on delivering telehealth services to individuals with limited English proficiency in one year.

Notable, Congress also included a provisions requirement an assessment and report to Congress on wearable medical devices in 18 months. The report on wearables includes a review of the potential for such devices to accurately prescribe treatments, an examination of artificial intelligence to augment such capabilities and policy options to enhance the benefits while mitigating challenges.