

# National Association for the Support of Long Term Care

Your Advocacy Voice for Quality In Post Acute Care

For Immediate Release  
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## *THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE SUPPORT OF LONG TERM CARE Recognizes Representative Mike Thompson for Leadership on Telehealth*

February 12, 2016 – Washington, DC – The National Association for the Support of Long Term Care (NASL) recognized Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA) with the 2016 NASL Congressional Leadership Award for his significant contributions to advancing telehealth. Congressman Thompson authored and is an original co-sponsor of the *Medicare Telehealth Parity Act (H.R. 2948)*, which would allow Medicare beneficiaries in urban and rural areas to access rehabilitation therapy through the use of telehealth technologies.

Representative Thompson, who serves on the Health Subcommittee of the House Ways & Means Committee, addressed attendees of the NASL Winter Conference last week and thanked NASL for the award. The Congressman explained, “I support telehealth because it saves money and it saves lives. Congress, the Administration and stakeholders in the healthcare community need to continue to work together to expand access to telehealth services for patients and providers across our country.”

NASL Executive Vice President Cynthia Morton concurred with the Congressman stating, “NASL has endorsed this forward-looking bipartisan legislation because telehealth is an important strategy to help achieve the triple aim of better health care, improved outcomes and lower costs as it can extend the reach of existing providers.” Thompson’s legislation, *H.R. 2948*, expands telehealth coverage under Medicare in three phases over four years and allows the services to be administered in several metropolitan areas in addition to rural areas. Importantly, the provisions in the bill authorize reimbursement for occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech language pathology services in originating sites. It also authorizes therapists furnishing these services to receive payment for covered telehealth services at distant sites.

NASL, which tracks telehealth issues, pointed to a recent pilot project in Washington State where telehealth helped to overcome significant barriers to patients’ timely access to rehabilitation therapy. The pilot demonstrated that telehealth could be used to bridge the gap between limited workforce resources and patient need and access to providers in rural areas. The improved clinical outcomes led to faster discharge and potentially reduced the risk of re-hospitalization.

NASL greatly appreciates Representative Thompson’s leadership on key issues like expanding telehealth, as well as his consistent support for repeal of the Part B Therapy cap.

*NASL is a trade association of ancillary providers of products and services to the post-acute industry, representing its members on Capitol Hill in legislative and regulatory issues that impact the quality of care to patients in the long term and post acute care setting. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact NASL, 1050 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036-5558, (202) 803-2385, [membership@nasl.org](mailto:membership@nasl.org)*

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