



The Washington heat is on Medicare's IPAB

By [Jessica Zigmond](#)

There must be something about the July heat in Washington that gets House Republicans fired up about the Independent Payment Advisory Board, a yet-to-be appointed panel the 2010 healthcare reform law created to control the per-capita growth rate in Medicare.

A year ago this week, [HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius testified before two House committees](#) to answer questions about the purpose and merits of the 15-member board. And this week—on the same day the House voted a second time to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act—Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), a physician, sent a letter to the AARP that asked the organizations representing America's seniors to publicly support repealing the board.

“As a physician with more than 30 years of experience, I have grave concerns that the IPAB will function as a denial-of-care board that will slash Medicare payments just to meet an arbitrary budget,” the lawmaker wrote to Barry Rand, AARP's CEO. “While advocates for the IPAB highlight statutory language that prohibits rationing, this term has never been adequately defined. In addition, the ACA does not prohibit reducing payments to physicians,” he continued. “As Medicare currently pays physicians only 80% of what private insurers do, any additional cuts could severely limit patients' access to care.”

Roe's bill to repeal IPAB now has 234 co-sponsors, including 20 Democrats. At deadline, a representative for AARP was not available for comment.

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