



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Public Health
In Support of H.2029 – An Act regarding notification of patient observation status
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December 8, 2015

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports H.2029, An Act regarding notification of patient observation status.

All too often, Medicare patients are being placed on “observation status” without their knowledge. Patients assume they have been admitted because they have been occupying a hospital bed. However, no amount of observation time counts for the three consecutive days of inpatient status that Medicare requires for follow-up rehab and/or nursing home care, and medications received while on observation status are not covered by Part B. Unaware that they have been on observation status, many elders are left with huge bills from both the hospital and any nursing or rehabilitation services that are needed post hospitalization.

This legislation requires that each hospital provide each patient that the hospital places in inpatient or observation status oral and written notice of the patient’s status not later than twenty-four hours after such placement. The written notice must include a statement that observation status may affect the patient’s Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance coverage and must be signed and dated by the patient receiving the notice or the patient’s legal or other authorized representative.

Since this bill has been introduced, similar Federal legislation has been passed. The difference is that the Public Law No:114-42 allows 36 hours rather than 24 hours for notification from the time of placement.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges the members of this Committee to vote to support this legislation and work to have it implemented in the current session.

Thank you for your consideration.