

116<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 6855

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure communications accessibility for residents of skilled nursing facilities during the COVID-19 emergency period.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 13, 2020

Ms. SÁNCHEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

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## A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure communications accessibility for residents of skilled nursing facilities during the COVID-19 emergency period.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Facilitating Virtual  
5 Visitation for Nursing Home Residents Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. ENSURING COMMUNICATIONS ACCESSIBILITY FOR**  
2 **RESIDENTS OF SKILLED NURSING FACILI-**  
3 **TIES DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY PE-**  
4 **RIOD.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1819(c)(3) of the Social  
6 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i–3(c)(3)) is amended—

7 (1) in subparagraph (D), by striking “and” at  
8 the end;

9 (2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period  
10 and inserting “; and”; and

11 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-  
12 paragraph:

13 “(F) provide for reasonable access to the  
14 use of a telephone, including TTY and TDD  
15 services (as defined for purposes of section  
16 483.10 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations  
17 (or a successor regulation)), and the internet  
18 (to the extent available to the facility) and in-  
19 form each such resident (or a representative of  
20 such resident) of such access and any changes  
21 in policies or procedures of such facility relating  
22 to limitations on external visitors.”.

23 (b) COVID-19 PROVISIONS.—

24 (1) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 15 days after  
25 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
26 of Health and Human Service shall issue guidance

1 on steps skilled nursing facilities may take to ensure  
2 residents have access to televisitation during the  
3 emergency period defined in section 1135(g)(1)(B)  
4 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b-  
5 5(g)(1)(B)). Such guidance shall include information  
6 on how such facilities will notify residents of such  
7 facilities, representatives of such residents, and rel-  
8 atives of such residents of the rights of such resi-  
9 dents to such televisitation, and ensure timely and  
10 equitable access to such televisitation.

11 (2) REVIEW OF FACILITIES.—The Secretary of  
12 Health and Human Services shall take such steps as  
13 determined appropriate by the Secretary to ensure  
14 that residents of skilled nursing facilities and rel-  
15 atives of such residents are made aware of the ac-  
16 cess rights described in section 1819(c)(3)(F) of the  
17 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i-3(c)(3)(F)).

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