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July 5, 2005

The Honorable Evan Bayh  
United States Senate  
SR-463 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-1404

The Honorable Larry E. Craig  
United States Senate  
SH-520 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-1203

Dear Senators Bayh and Craig:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA), our 4,800 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and 33,000 individual members, I am writing to voice our support for the "Flu Protection Act of 2005" (S. 375). The AHA applauds your leadership in developing a comprehensive approach to improving the nations supply of flu vaccine. New varieties of influenza pose significant challenges to hospitals and health care systems in the United States. While hospitals are routinely called upon to deal with the needs of patients during the annual flu season we are especially troubled about reports concerning the potential for a pandemic flu of yet unseen proportions. We believe that now is the time to implement a long-term solution to our flu vaccine supply problems.

Public health officials in many countries have stated that they believe a new flu pandemic will occur in the foreseeable future. It is believed that widespread international travel will assist in the rapid transmission of the flu virus throughout the world. While modern sanitation, infection control practices and anti-viral drugs may help to limit an outbreak we believe it is prudent to increase our nation's preparedness. Now is the time to implement a long-term solution to our flu vaccine supply problems.

We are pleased that your legislation also would improve education and outreach activities to both the general public and health care workers about an upcoming flu season, we applaud your measures that would increase support for greater planning at the state and national levels. Education and outreach, and better public health planning are critical steps toward responding to both epidemic and pandemic flu outbreaks.

We look forward toward working with you and your staff on this important issue as it moves through the legislative process. If you have any questions feel free to contact Curtis Rooney (202) 626-2678.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

