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July 18, 2006

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
416 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and our 4,800 member hospitals, health systems and other providers of care, and our 35,000 individual members, we are pleased to support the "Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act" (S.3678). We applaud your commitment to a reauthorizing a sustainable "all-hazards" approach to disaster preparedness. We especially appreciate the open and bi-partisan manner in which you have developed this important legislation.

The AHA believes your bill will allow hospitals to continue to develop comprehensive preparedness plans; upgrade disease surveillance, communications, disease reporting, and investigation tools; and expand communications capacities. While we would have preferred that the bill would improve current funding levels, we are pleased that it does retain specific funding streams already available to help hospitals prepare for future disasters. Experience has proven that hospitals are often the first place people turn to in times of trouble, and all hospitals should be provided with the resources to maintain at least a minimum level of "all-hazards" preparedness.

In summary, we support your efforts to strengthen our nation's ability to respond to all hazards ... whether caused by man, like terrorism, or by nature, like various epidemics. Our nation has been enormously proud of all of those hospital workers who have been called to serve their fellow citizens – whether responding to the terrorist attacks of September 11, the subsequent anthrax attacks or hurricanes in the Gulf Coast. We look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure that this kind of response can continue. Please call Curtis Rooney at (202) 626-2678 if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

cc: Senators Kennedy, Enzi, Gregg, Frist and Harkin

