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September 12, 2006

The Honorable Judd Gregg
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gregg:

On behalf of our 4,800 member hospitals, health care systems and other health care organizations, and our 33,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to support the *Medicare Quality Enhancement Act*.

As part of the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA), the AHA for the past several years has worked toward increasing the importance of quality measurement in our health care system. The HQA is a truly public-private partnership that strives, on a consensus basis, to implement a variety of clinical measures that will enhance quality and efficiency in our nations' hospitals.

We strongly believe that clinical measures based on data obtained from individual patient records represent the most reliable method for assessing the performance of individual hospitals. However, administrative data, such as the Medicare billing data, can be used to assess the quality of care across the entire health care delivery system and point toward areas where further investigation is likely to lead to the identification of improvement opportunities. The ability to analyze the full Medicare data set will enable the health care field to have a fuller picture of quality throughout an entire episode of care. It may enable us to identify opportunities to reduce readmissions and other complications of care.

We commend your leadership on this very important issue. We look forward to continuing to work together to pass the *Medicare Quality Enhancement Act*.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

