

November 13, 2006

Dear Colleague:

Attached is an advisory outlining AHA's policy and guidance to members on an issue of major importance to every hospital: community benefits reporting.

Elected officials, local governments, the media and the public are asking legitimate questions of the nation's hospitals about their value to the communities they serve. And hospitals have a strong and proud story to tell.

We've included a one-page form that will allow you to state the financial value of the full range of your community benefits. Although total dollar value is very important, particularly to elected officials and government agencies – and we urge every hospital to proactively report it – you know there is another number that's even more important. That's the number of people whose lives are made better and healthier because of the very special work you do as part of your historic mission.

This latest guidance encourages you to calculate and report both dimensions of your community benefit. It follows up on our September 7 advisory that clarified the AHA policy: that we embrace the reporting requirements contained in the *CHA/VHA Guide for Planning and Reporting Community Benefit* but with the additional reporting of bad debt and Medicare underpayment at cost. That policy is reflected in the new guidance.

Tell the full story, not only to elected officials and government agencies, but to your employees (they will be proud of their work), medical staff, your local media and everyone in the community you serve. They believe in your mission and count on you every day. They deserve to know how hard you work to meet their most important needs and their high expectations.

*Thanks* for your AHA membership and for all you do for your patients and communities.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Umbdenstock  
Chief Operating Officer & President-elect

