

May 9, 2007

The Honorable Tom Allen
United States House of Representatives
1127 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Allen:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems, and other health care organizations, and our 37,000 individual members, I am writing to express our support for your bill, H.R. 2050, the Medicaid Psychiatric Hospital Fairness Act of 2007.

The Emergency Medical and Labor Treatment Act (EMTALA) requires hospitals, including psychiatric facilities, to stabilize any and all persons who arrive needing emergency medical care. At the same time the Medicaid program, through the Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion, prevents non-public psychiatric hospitals from receiving Medicaid reimbursement for Medicaid patients between the ages of 21-64. As a result, these hospitals are burdened with an unfunded mandate: They must fulfill their EMTALA obligations for these patients, but will not be reimbursed for the cost of providing that care.

Your legislation will allow non-public psychiatric hospitals to receive appropriate reimbursement for Medicaid beneficiaries between the ages of 21-64 who require emergency treatment and stabilization as required by EMTALA. This will relieve overcrowding in emergency departments and provide the appropriate care these patients deserve in a more timely manner.

Thank you for addressing this important issue. We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of H.R. 2050.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President