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July 31, 2007

The Honorable John Larson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1005 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Representative Larson:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association's (AHA) nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 37,000 individual members, I am writing to express support for the *Medicare Long-Term Patient Safety and Improvement Act of 2007*, H.R. 3057, a thoughtful approach to define the appropriate role for long-term care hospitals (LTCHs) in treating medically complex, long-stay Medicare patients.

As you know, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and others have called for the development of new LTCH patient and facility criteria to ensure that the appropriate patients are treated in LTCHs. However, rather than enact such criteria, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has promulgated a series of payment regulations that arbitrarily limit patient access to LTCH services. As a result, current regulatory instability threatens LTCHs' ability to continue caring for Medicare beneficiaries and other patients.

Your legislation will take the necessary steps to develop and implement criteria to differentiate LTCHs from other post-acute care settings. LTCHs welcome the rapid development and implementation of patient-level, facility-level, and medical necessity criteria, in addition to a common patient screening tool. It also would provide regulatory stability by modifying some of the current LTCH payment regulations that arbitrarily limit patient access to these necessary services.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support of your legislation. Our common goal is to ensure that patients' health and well-being are served appropriately. We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to enact this important piece of legislation this year.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

