



**American Hospital
Association**

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March 3, 2008

The Honorable Michael Burgess
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bart Stupak
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Burgess and Stupak:

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 soon-to-be- introduced legislation, the *Patients and Public Health Partnership Act of 2008*. With nearly 47 million uninsured Americans and more than 56 million Americans lacking access to primary and preventive care, it is clear that Congress needs to explore additional ways to make cost-effective primary care much more available and accessible.

Many of the private, nonprofit safety-net clinics that help meet this need are in precarious financial condition and, without the financial support of a parent hospital and other private charitable sources of funding, could be forced to close their doors. At the same time, many of the parent hospitals also are in precarious financial shape. Yet, under current law, they are unable to qualify for federal funding under the *Public Health Service Act* for primary and preventive care provided to the uninsured.

Your legislation would help solve the dilemma by allowing integrated health systems to receive funding that would be critical to helping them maintain and expand access to cost-effective primary and preventive care in their communities. We greatly appreciate that this legislation was developed with the full cooperation and input of the National Association of Community Health Centers.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

