



American Hospital
Association

Liberty Place, Suite 700
325 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004-2802
(202) 638-1100 Phone
www.aha.org

July 24, 2008

The Honorable Greg Walden
United States House of Representatives
1210 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Walden:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 37,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) wishes to express its support for H.R. 6557, the *Veterans Critical Access Act*.

This legislation will allow Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) to exempt from their daily inpatient bed limit care provided to veterans who have been referred by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or veterans who are coordinating care with the department. CAHs may have daily fluctuations that drive their hospital's census above 25, but by law they are required to maintain a daily census of under 25 beds. This legislation will give hospitals the ability to continue to care for their current patients, while also being able to provide critical care to veterans who need immediate services in their own communities.

Similar to a legislative proposal allowing CAH bed size flexibility that you sponsored in H.R. 2860, *The Health Care Access and Rural Equity Act of 2007* (H-CARE), this bill will provide increased flexibility to better accommodate patients' needs.

Again, we applaud your efforts and are pleased to support H.R. 6557. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to achieve passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

