



**American Hospital
Association**

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January 22, 2009

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
223 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems, and other health care organizations, and our 38,000 individual members, I am writing to express our strong support for the Critical Access Hospital Flexibility Act of 2009.

Many Critical Access Hospitals can maintain an average daily census of 25 beds or less, but others have to respond to seasonal or daily demands that easily can drive their census above 25. This legislation will give hospitals the flexibility to choose between the currently required 25-bed-per-day count or an alternative that would allow for a 20-day census based on an annual average. This will allow many of these hospitals to continue meeting community needs while retaining their much-needed Critical Access Hospital status.

We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

