



**American Hospital  
Association**

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June 23, 2011

The Honorable Mark Kirk  
United States Senate  
524 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kirk:

On behalf of our more than 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 42,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) wishes to express our support for the “Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare Act” (S.1099), a bill to reduce health care costs and promote access to quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

The high costs associated with the current medical liability system not only harm hospitals and physicians, but also patients and their communities. Across the nation, access to health care is being negatively impacted as physicians move from states with high insurance costs or stop providing services that may expose them to a greater risk of litigation. The increased costs that result from the current flawed medical liability system not only hinder access to affordable health care, they also threaten the stability of the hospital field, which employed 5.3 million people in 2009, and continues to be one of the largest sources of private-sector jobs.

An estimated \$50 to \$100 billion is spent annually on defensive medicine – services not provided for the primary purpose of benefiting the patient, but rather to mitigate the risk of liability. To help make health care more affordable and efficient, the current medical liability system must be reformed.

The “Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare Act” is based on the proven model of reform enacted decades ago in California, and was supported by the AHA when introduced in previous Congresses. We applaud your leadership on this issue, and enthusiastically support S. 1099. We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation and other proposals that will deliver meaningful medical liability reform.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

cc. The Honorable Roy Blunt

