American Hospital Association

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July 8, 2011

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
Energy and Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
420 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pitts:

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 support for the *Children's Hospital GME Support Reauthorization Act of 2011* (H.R. 1852), which would reauthorize the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program at its current funding level for the next five years.

Congress created CHGME in 1999 to support graduate medical education programs at children's hospitals that train resident physicians, enhance research capabilities and care for poor and medically underserved children in rural and inner-city areas. The program provides funding to independent children's hospitals in more than 30 states to train primary care pediatricians. Children's hospitals treat very few Medicare patients; therefore, they do not receive Medicare funding to support medical training of residents. The CHGME program corrects this inequity. CHGME helps independent children's hospitals train more than 40 percent of general pediatricians, 43 percent of all pediatric specialists and the majority of pediatric researchers.

In the face of a nationwide physician shortage and in anticipation of the increased health care coverage provided under the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*, the need for pediatricians is greater than ever. The AHA was dismayed that President Obama's fiscal year 2012 budget proposes to terminate CHGME. Eliminating the program will be detrimental to the mutual goals of strengthening the primary care workforce and ensuring timely access to critical, high-quality specialty care.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President