



**American Hospital
Association**

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The Honorable Richard Burr
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

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) is pleased to support the *Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act Reauthorization of 2011* (S. 1855) and the *Medical Surge Capacity Act* (S. 1854).

This legislation would strengthen our national medical and public health preparedness and response capabilities by reauthorizing critical programs enacted by the *Pandemic and All-Hazards Act of 2006*. It provides fine tuning of existing programs for more flexibility, as well as opportunities for greater collaboration. America's hospitals have been at the forefront of responding to disasters, whether naturally occurring or manmade, and stand ready to provide care in future emergencies.

We are hopeful that S. 1855 will reauthorize programs at the fiscal year 2011 level of \$417 million. The bill falls short of this by \$39 million. Hospitals need sufficient funding in order to prepare and provide care during emergencies. Increasing the authorized amount by at least \$39 million is critical, and we look forward to working with you to make this change.

We applaud your leadership in using lessons learned since 2006 to make necessary changes, such as allowing the Health and Human Services Secretary to implement Section 1135 waivers for hospitals without a concurrent requirement for a presidential declaration, allowing waivers to be used in areas that receive evacuees from a disaster and aligning the duration of time permitted for agency enforcement discretion for certain regulations to coincide with hospital accreditation agency standards. These changes are critical to allow hospitals to continue to provide optimal care during declared emergencies.

We are pleased to support this legislation and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to achieve passage of these bills.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

