



**American Hospital
Association**

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

February 1, 2012

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
US House of Representatives
2421 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of our more than 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our nearly 42,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to support *The Rural Hospital and Provider Equity Act of 2011* (R-HoPE) and applauds your commitment to America's rural health care providers.

This legislation would extend critical rural provisions that are set to expire and implement new provisions that would benefit rural hospitals. Among the expiring provisions are the outpatient "hold-harmless" for rural hospitals with fewer than 100 beds and sole community hospitals, the reasonable cost-based reimbursement for rural hospitals with fewer than 50 beds in certain areas, and the grandfather clause allowing direct payments to independent laboratories for the technical component of pathology services. Rural hospitals and health care providers are often the backbone of their communities, and it is essential that these programs be extended to ensure that rural providers can continue to provide high-quality care to their patients.

Your legislation also takes the important step of putting forward expanded provisions that are vital to rural and critical access hospitals (CAHs), including: expansion of the low-volume adjustment to 2,000 discharges, and reimbursing CAHs at cost-based reimbursement for ambulance services and eliminating the 35 mile "isolation test."

Again, we are pleased to support this legislation and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to achieve its passage.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

