



**American Hospital
Association**

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July 31, 2012

The Honorable Thomas Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin:

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).

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. As you work with the House of Representatives on a final reauthorization bill, we ask for your leadership in using lessons learned since 2006 to make necessary changes to Section 1135 waivers, such as allowing the Health and Human Services Secretary to implement Section 1135 waivers for hospitals without a concurrent requirement for a presidential declaration and allowing waivers to be used in areas that receive evacuees from a disaster. These changes are critical to allow hospitals to continue to provide optimal care during declared emergencies and should be included in the final reauthorization bill.

We are pleased to support this legislation and hope these necessary changes to Section 1135 also will be included.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

