



**American Hospital  
Association**

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The Honorable Dave Camp  
Chairman  
United States House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Camp:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 43,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) urges you to support the *Puerto Rico HITECH Amendments Act of 2013* (H.R. 1379). This legislation would enable Puerto Rico hospitals to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Records (EHR) Incentive Programs.

Congress established the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs in the *Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act*, which was part of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009*, to provide much-needed funds to support the transition to an e-enabled health care system. Hospitals share Congress' vision of a health care system where widespread use of interoperable EHRs supports improved clinical care, better coordination of care, fully informed and engaged patients, and improved public health.

Under the programs, hospitals that meet the criteria as "meaningful users" of certified EHR technology are eligible to receive incentive payments to encourage the transition to electronic recordkeeping, resulting in better patient care for all patients. Unfortunately, the definition of "hospital" in the Medicare program under HITECH does not include Puerto Rico hospitals; thus, they are currently ineligible to receive EHR incentives under Medicare. We believe this exclusion is an unintended oversight as Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, its residents are U.S. citizens, and its hospitals provide care for nearly 3.8 million Puerto Rican U.S. citizens.

H.R. 1379 would correct the definition of "hospital" under HITECH by including Puerto Rico hospitals as eligible to participate in the Medicare EHR Incentive Program. Enacting this legislation would not only bring equity to Puerto Rico hospitals, but would help modernize Puerto Rico hospitals and enable better coordination of care for their patients.

The AHA supports enacting this measure, and looks forward to working with you as this legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

