



**American Hospital
Association**

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September 24, 2013

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association's (AHA) nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 43,000 individual members, I urge you to support extension of expiring health programs and provisions important to hospitals and the patients they serve.

Over the years, Congress has enacted several provisions to address the special challenges small and rural hospitals encounter in delivering health care services to the communities they serve. In January, Congress passed *The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012* that contained many provisions important to rural hospitals and beneficiaries. However, many of these programs will expire September 30 or by the end of this year and must be extended.

Hospitals strive to provide their communities with quality care every day, and they face tough challenges to ensure patients continue to have timely access to essential services. However, it is often difficult to plan for community and patient needs when there is uncertainty over whether a program will continue. We ask that you address these concerns and extend the critical programs listed below:

- The Medicare-dependent hospital program.
- The enhanced low-volume adjustment for inpatient prospective payment system hospitals.
- Ambulance add-on payments.
- Outpatient therapy caps exception process (without expansion of the cap into outpatient departments and Critical Access Hospitals).
- The outpatient hold-harmless provision for rural hospitals and Sole Community Hospitals (*expired December 31, 2012*).



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The AHA supports legislation introduced in the Congress to extend these programs. *The Rural Hospital Access Act* (S. 842/H.R. 1787), introduced by Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Reps. Tom Reed (R-NY) and Peter Welch (D-VT), would extend the Medicare-dependent hospital program and enhanced Medicare low-volume adjustment until September 30, 2014. *The Rural Hospital Fairness Act* (H.R. 2578), introduced by Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA), would reinstate the outpatient hold-harmless for rural hospitals and Sole Community Hospitals. *The Medicare Ambulance Access Act* (S. 1405), introduced by Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Pat Roberts (R-KS), would extend ground ambulance and super rural ambulance payments for five years.

Your support for extending these programs and provisions is vital. The AHA looks forward to working with you to help protect the patients and communities our hospitals serve.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President