

September 26, 2013

The Honorable Lynn Jenkins  
United States House of Representatives  
1027 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Jenkins:

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) is pleased to support your legislation.

Approximately 46 million Americans live in rural areas and depend on the hospital serving their community as an important, and often only, source of care. These hospitals face unique challenges because of their remote geographic location, scarce workforce, physician shortages and constrained financial resources with limited access to capital. Congress has previously recognized these vulnerabilities by establishing programs and policies to ensure and protect stable access to health care services for the elderly and others living in rural America. Specifically, it created critical access hospital (CAH), sole community hospital (SCH) and Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) and rural referral centers (RRC) designations to sustain these unique types of rural or small hospitals.

Your resolution recognizes the important role rural hospitals play in their communities. It is important that Congress continue to recognize the value of these organizations. Because of their small size, modest assets and financial reserves, and higher percentages of Medicare patients, rural hospitals disproportionately rely on government payments; unfortunately, Medicare payment systems often fail to recognize the unique circumstances of small and rural hospitals. The AHA has and will continue to advocate for appropriate payment on behalf of small and rural hospitals and CAHs.

Again, we are pleased to support this resolution and applaud your commitment to America's rural hospitals and health care providers.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

