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February 5, 2015

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

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, the Medicare Ambulance Access, Fraud Prevention and Reform Act of 2015 (S. 377), which provides for a permanent increase in payment rates for ambulance services in rural areas.

Congress has routinely provided for additional rural payments for ambulance providers because they incur higher per-trip costs due to longer travel distances and fewer transports of patients than their urban counterparts. The current extension of these payments will expire on March 31 without further action from Congress.

In addition to protecting access to ambulance services in rural areas through adequate payment, your legislation directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to study how the additional payments should be modified (if at all) to account for the costs of providing ambulance services in urban, rural and super-rural areas. This would ensure that federal payments are aligned with appropriate data and utilization patterns. Finally, the bill also directs the Secretary to establish a process for preauthorization of ambulance services for patients with end-stage renal disease.

Again, the AHA supports S. 377 and looks forward to working with you and your colleagues toward final passage.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack  
Executive Vice President

