

## **SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR:**

As [TITLE] of [ORGANIZATION NAME], I see every day how the highly specialized care provided by inpatient rehabilitation hospitals helps patients recover from illness and get back to activities of daily living quickly. These hospitals treat the patients' medical and rehabilitative needs with care unmatched in any other health setting. With teams of specialty-trained physicians and nurses who care for patients on a 24-hour basis, inpatient rehabilitation hospitals help patients get the right care at the right time, and in the right setting.

Unfortunately, a misguided federal policy has reduced the availability of this care for patients in [NAME OF COMMUNITY] and across America. Called the "75% Rule," this regulation threatens access to rehabilitative care. It requires that a percentage of patients (currently at 65 percent but rising to 75 percent in 2008) must be treated for one of 13 specific conditions in order for a hospital to retain its inpatient rehabilitation status.

And what does this mean? In essence, hospitals like ours are forced to use the 75% Rule to determine whether to admit a patient rather than the patient's actual medical condition. Because of the 75% Rule, patients who would have previously been cared for in rehabilitation hospitals and units are being denied access to inpatient rehabilitative care that is medically necessary and has been proven to lead to superior patient outcomes in a shorter period of time than other settings might accomplish.

An additional roadblock to access is local coverage determinations (LCDs)—arbitrary regulatory interpretations of Medicare policy which further stretch scarce hospital resources and threaten patient access to medical rehabilitation. Patients deserve to have important medical care decisions made based on their independent clinical needs, not through a "one size fits all" policy.

However bills have been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate by a bipartisan slate of legislators that would prevent full implementation of the 75 Percent Rule. Called the "Preserving Patient Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospitals Act of 2007," this legislation would freeze the patient percentage at 60 percent, preserving access to inpatient rehabilitative care for the patients who need it.

Health decisions should be left in the hands of doctors, nurses and other caregivers, not made through arbitrary and burdensome regulations. I urge [name of Representative and Senators] to support this legislation that puts patients first and co-sponsor H.R. 1459 and S. 543. Our patients deserving nothing less.

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[ORGANIZATION NAME]