



American Hospital  
Association®

# Advocacy Messages

2016 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

## YOUR MISSION ON CAPITOL HILL:

1. Share how your hospital is enhancing value and making care more affordable for your patients and community.
2. Urge your legislators to take action to partner in hospitals' efforts to continue to improve care and deliver greater value (*see reverse*).

**PATIENTS AND PAYERS—BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE—ARE DEMANDING GREATER VALUE FOR THEIR HEALTH CARE DOLLARS.** While progress has been made in bending the cost curve, more needs to be done.

Hospitals and health systems are playing a leading role in enhancing value and making care more affordable by:

- Redesigning care and embracing alternative payment models that promote better, more efficient, coordinated and seamless care for patients
- Improving quality and patient safety to reduce readmissions, complications and health disparities
- Taking responsibility for the health outcomes of designated groups within the community
- Fostering innovation and adopting new technologies to improve care
- Implementing proven, evidence-based guidelines and protocols that reduce variation and ensure that patients get only the care that is most beneficial
- Promoting better strategies for managing advanced illnesses

Hospitals are working overtime to get to zero. For example, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that, between 2010 and 2014, hospital-acquired conditions declined 17%, saving 87,000 lives and nearly \$20 billion in averted costs.

But hospitals cannot do it alone. Escalating drug prices, major health insurance company mergers, workforce shortages, outdated laws and regulations, and mounting red tape threaten our efforts. It will take a real effort by everyone involved—insurers, hospitals, businesses, physicians, nurses, employers and individuals.

## ASK YOUR LEGISLATORS TO DO THE FOLLOWING NOW:

- 1. SIGN THE “DEAR COLLEAGUE” LETTERS LED BY** Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Reps. Devin Nunes (R-CA) and Joseph Crowley (D-NY) calling for protections for off-campus hospital outpatient departments. To ensure patient access to care is not threatened, hospitals need flexibility and assurances that the following will not trigger reclassification and payment reductions:

- Relocation or rebuilding
- Expansion of service offerings
- Changes in ownership

In addition, they need confirmation that all items and services provided in dedicated ED facilities fall under the exception from the cuts contained in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015.

- 2. PASS LEGISLATION TO REFORM** the hospital merger review process by standardizing reviews between the federal antitrust agencies — the Standard Merger and Acquisition Reviews Through Equal Rules (SMARTER) Act (S. 2102), which would prohibit the Federal Trade Commission from using its own internal administrative court to challenge hospital transactions (the bill passed the House of Representatives in March).

- 3. ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY BARRIERS TO CARE BY:**

- Creating an anti-kickback safe harbor for clinical integration programs and refocusing the “Stark” law on its original intent—barring physicians from referring patients to facilities in which they have an ownership interest
- Passing the Critical Access Hospital Relief Act (H.R. 169/S. 258) to remove the 96-hour physician certification requirement as a condition of payment
- Supporting legislation to permanently adopt a default standard of “general supervision” for outpatient therapeutic services, especially for CAHs and small rural hospitals, including the Protecting Access to Rural Therapy Services Act (H.R. 1611/S. 257)
- Passing the Establishing Beneficiary Equity in the Hospital Readmission Program Act (H.R. 1343/S. 688) to adjust Medicare’s readmissions reduction program to account for certain sociodemographic factors that can increase a patient’s risk of readmission