Thursday, May 18, 2017

Bipartisan legislation would create new option for rural hospitals

Urge your senators to cosponsor S. 1130

Sens. Charles Grassley (R-IA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Cory Gardner (R-CO) introduced the Rural Emergency Acute Care Hospital (REACH) Act, which would allow critical access hospitals and small rural hospitals with 50 or fewer beds to convert to rural emergency hospitals (REHs) and continue providing necessary emergency and observation services at reimbursement rates of 110 percent of reasonable costs. The legislation also provides enhanced reimbursement rates for the transportation of patients to acute care hospitals in neighboring communities.

Please contact your senators and urge them to cosponsor S. 1130, which is an important first step toward ensuring access in certain rural areas. While the AHA supports the REACH Act, more needs to be done, and the AHA is eager to work with Congress to take additional action.

For example, a REH has the potential to improve access to care for all vulnerable communities, not just those in rural areas. There is also a continued need to ensure access to more than just emergency and observation services in these communities. For example, innovative approaches are need to support access to primary care, psychiatric and substance use treatment, post-acute and diagnostic services. To that end, we urge Congress to consider the recommendations made by the AHA's Task Force on Ensuring Access in Vulnerable Communities that would preserve such access.

AHA Rural Hospital Policy Forum
Register Today!

Please join AHA President & CEO Rick Pollack in Washington, D.C., July 19-20 for the 2nd Annual AHA Rural Hospital Policy Forum to hear firsthand from members of Congress and key staff about federal actions to address critical issues facing rural hospitals. AHA Executive Vice President Tom Nickels will moderate a Congressional staff panel and provide an update on AHA advocacy priorities, including extending special rural payment programs and ensuring access in vulnerable communities through expanded telehealth and alternative payment models. See the attached flyer for more details including hotel and registration information.