



American Hospital Association®

Contact: Marie Watteau, 202-626-2351, mwatteau@aha.org
Jennifer Schleman, 202-638-5491, jschleman@aha.org

STATEMENT ON FAIRNESS IN HEALTH CARE CLAIMS, GUIDANCE AND INVESTIGATIONS ACT

**Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President
American Hospital Association**

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The AHA strongly supports the bipartisan Fairness in Health Care Claims, Guidance and Investigations Act. America's hospitals agree with the need for federal enforcement agencies to detect, deter and eradicate fraud in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. However, conflicting and confusing government regulations covering these programs can easily result in unintentional billing mistakes by hospitals.

Despite hospitals' best efforts, billing errors happen as hospitals are required to understand and comply with hundreds of thousands of pages of Medicare and Medicaid regulations, guidelines, billing instructions and similar documents. These guidelines and regulations change frequently and can be interpreted differently by various government officials and the numerous contractors the government now uses to administer, audit and police federal health care programs. Hospitals have established significant compliance programs as part of their commitment to following the laws and regulations.

This legislation would require that federal agencies review their own rules and regulations to determine whether a billing dispute should be pursued as fraud before launching an investigation. In addition, it includes provisions to ensure that unintentional billing disputes aren't penalized as fraud. The bill will help hospitals focus their limited resources on patient care, not on unnecessary paperwork.

We applaud the leadership of Representatives Howard Coble and David Scott for introducing this important legislation and encourage quick passage by Congress.

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