

May 22, 2018

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
United States Senate  
716 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dean Heller  
United States Senate  
324 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Nelson and Heller:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses, and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) thanks you for your continued leadership in promoting access to quality care in communities across the nation. We are pleased to support S. 2843, the Opioid Workforce Treatment Act of 2018, which would reduce the shortage of opioid treatment providers by increasing the number of resident physician slots in hospitals with programs focused on substance use disorder (SUD) treatment.

As the nation continues to struggle with the devastating public health crisis stemming from the opioid epidemic, we recognize that the shortage of SUD treatment providers has led to lengthy waiting periods for treatment and increased mortality from opioid misuse and addiction. A recent report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine highlighted the dearth of clinicians with specialized training in Medication Assisted Treatment, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has estimated that only 10 percent of the 22 million Americans with a SUD receive treatment.

Your legislation would address these shortages by providing 1,000 additional Medicare-funded residency positions in approved residency programs in addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry or pain management. These new slots would constitute a major step toward increasing access to SUD treatment for communities in need. We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of this important legislation.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Priscilla A. Ross, senior associate director of federal relations, at [pross@aha.org](mailto:pross@aha.org) or (202) 626-2677.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President

