



**American Hospital
Association®**

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July 28, 2015

The Honorable Tom MacArthur
United States House of Representatives
506 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman MacArthur:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 43,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to express our support for your legislation, The Veterans' Mental Health Care Access Act (H.R. 1604), which expands access to mental health services for veterans.

Your legislation is important for ensuring veterans receive timely access to mental health services by amending the Veteran's Choice Act to include access to non-Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental health services. One key component of your legislation is to allow veterans to access mental health services at non-VA facilities regardless of whether the veteran has attempted to schedule an appointment at a VA facility or the location of the veteran's residence.

America's hospitals strive to ensure patients get the right care, at the right time, in the right setting. As such, they have a long-standing history of collaboration with the VA and are eager to assist the VA and our veterans, in any way possible, including by providing care through the Veteran's Choice Program. We believe your legislation will address some of the barriers veterans may face when trying to receive mental health services. This is incredibly important in light of the devastating statistics on veterans' mental health problems, including suicides, post-traumatic stress disorder and other service-related mental health disorders.

America's hospitals want to help care for the brave men and women who have served our country, and we applaud your leadership.

Sincerely,

Tom Nickels
Senior Vice President

