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*Advancing Health in America*

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## **AHA STATEMENT ON REVISED LOWER HEALTH CARE COSTS ACT**

**Tom Nickels  
Executive Vice President  
American Hospital Association**

**June 19, 2019**

The AHA applauds Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray and the Senate HELP Committee for their continued commitment to protecting patients. The Lower Health Care Costs Act includes critical provisions to hold patients harmless from surprise medical bills, including for air ambulance transport.

At the same time, the reliance on a benchmark payment rate for providers is unworkable, and we strongly urge the committee to reconsider. Arbitrary, government-dictated reimbursement would result in significant unintended consequences for patients and create a disincentive for insurers to maintain adequate provider networks, particularly in rural America.

Similarly, certain restrictions on contracting could lead to even more narrow networks with fewer provider choices for patients, while adversely affecting access to care at rural and community hospitals serving vulnerable communities.

We remain supportive of the committee's proposals to make important investments in public health, including efforts to improve maternal health outcomes. We also appreciate the committee's focus on enhancing health information technology while protecting patient privacy.

Lastly, we support provisions to lower the price of prescription drugs for both patients and the providers who care for them.

We look forward to our continued work with the committee to make health care and coverage more affordable.

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