

September 6, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, 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) writes in support of the adoption of a unique patient identifier (UPI).

For the past 20 years, language has been included in appropriations bills prohibiting the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from spending any federal funding to adopt a UPI. Removing the prohibition on the use of federal funds to promulgate or adopt a national UPI would provide HHS the ability to explore solutions that link patients with their correct medical records.

On June 12, the House of Representatives [voted](#) to remove the ban on funding for a UPI when it passed H.R. 2740, the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2020. We encourage the Senate fiscal year 2020 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill also to allow funding for this critical issue.



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America's hospitals and health systems are committed to ensuring the highest quality care in a timely manner. Funding for a UPI would help reduce administrative costs and ensure efficient, timely care for patients. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with you to ensure appropriate patient identification methods.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President