

December 11, 2020

The Honorable Tim Kaine  
United States Senate  
231 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senate  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young  
United States Senate  
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
United States Senate  
520 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Kaine, Reed, Young and Cassidy:

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 to express support for S. 4349, the *Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act*.

Front-line health care workers have been steadfast in leading the fight against this pandemic since the first COVID-19 cases were identified in January, and their efforts have been extraordinary. After nearly a year of working through the intensity of the pandemic, these dedicated workers are now facing another spike in hospitalizations.

Concerns are mounting about how the number of physicians, nurses and other health workers are coping with emotional and physical strain from treating COVID-19 patients. We know – both from survey data and anecdotally from extensive discussions with our members – that clinicians are suffering. A study reported by the [National Academy of Medicine](#) shows that between 35% and 54% of clinicians report at least one symptom of burnout, more than double the amount of burnout found in other fields. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this situation worse. These workers need and deserve added support as they continue to care for severely ill patients.



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Your bipartisan bill, the *Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act*, aims to reduce and prevent suicide, burnout and behavioral health disorders among health care professionals. The legislation would, among other provisions, authorize grants to health care providers to establish programs that offer behavioral health services for front-line workers. In addition, the bill would require HHS to study and develop recommendations on strategies to address provider burnout and facilitate resiliency, and it would direct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to launch a campaign encouraging health care workers to seek assistance when needed.

We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the nation's health care workforce, and we look forward to working with you to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President