



**American Hospital
Association®**

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April 11, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

As the nation continues to struggle with the devastating public health crisis created by the opioid epidemic, it is encouraging to see the Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions take constructive action. We appreciate your interest and commitment to action and welcome this opportunity to work with you. 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 – the American Hospital Association (AHA) thanks you for your leadership in addressing the nation's opioid epidemic.

The AHA is pleased to strongly support S. 2516, the Alternatives to Opioids (ALTO) in the Emergency Department Act, introduced by Senators Booker, Capito, Bennet, and Gardner. This important legislation would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a demonstration program to test alternative pain management protocols to limit the use of opioids in emergency departments (EDs).

S. 2516 is informed by successful programs in states like New Jersey and Colorado. In its first year of operation, the ALTO program decreased ED opioid prescriptions by 58 percent. A similar initiative in 10 EDs in Colorado decreased ED opioid usage by 36 percent in just six months. The success of these programs alone shows great promise for S. 2516 to not only help in combating the opioid crisis, but also in studying alternatives to opioids that offer meaningful pain relief to patients. As the Committee continues to develop comprehensive legislation to address the nation's opioid epidemic, we encourage you to incorporate S. 2516 into the HELP Committee bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement of support to the Committee. If you have any questions, please contact Priscilla A. Ross, Senior Associate Director of Federal Relations, at pross@aha.org or (202) 626-2677.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President

