



**American Hospital
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March 26, 2015

The Honorable Kristi Noem
United States House of Representatives
2422 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Noem:

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 support the Protecting Access to Rural Therapy Services Act of 2015 (H.R. 1611), which would provide hospitals relief from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations with respect to direct supervision of outpatient therapeutic services. We applaud your leadership and commitment to America's health care providers and stand ready to advocate for H.R. 1611.

Your legislation would require CMS to change its current policy and allow for a default setting of general supervision for outpatient therapeutic services. It also would create an advisory panel to establish an exceptions process for risky and complex outpatient services which require a higher direct level of supervision. In addition, a special rule would be established for critical access hospitals (CAH), in recognition of their unique size and Medicare Conditions of Participation.

Importantly, your legislation also includes a hold harmless for hospitals and CAHs beginning in 2011 from any civil or criminal action for failure to meet CMS's supervision requirements for the period 2001 through 2015. Although CMS claims its policy is a "restatement and clarification" of existing policy, it is in fact a significant change that has left hospitals vulnerable to retroactive penalties. Your legislation acknowledges this and provides relief for those hospitals have been appropriately providing patient care.

Again, we are pleased to support the Protecting Access to Rural Therapy Services Act and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to achieve its passage.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

