



American Hospital
Association®

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June 8, 2016

The Honorable Susan Brooks
U.S. House of Representatives
1505 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
U.S. House of Representatives
241 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Brooks and Eshoo:

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 updated provision in H.R. 3299, the Strengthening Public Health Emergency Response Act of 2015 that would require a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on state, local and hospital preparedness programs.

America's hospitals appreciate your leadership on emergency preparedness and your understanding of the crucial role America's hospitals and health systems play in saving lives when emergencies happen. Hospitals' ability to have plans, resources, staff, training exercises and networks with public health and others in the community relies on the financial resources of the hospital as a whole, since there is virtually no reimbursement for stand-by capacity. Hospitals' ability to help their communities in times of need and be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week is part of every hospital's mission, and makes hospitals unique in their communities.

The Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) has been instrumental in hospitals' ability to prepare for the worst. It is the primary federal funding program for hospital emergency preparedness and has provided critical resources since 2002 to improve health care surge capacity and help ensure hospitals are prepared for a wide range of emergencies. However, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act of 2013 reduced authorized funding levels for HPP to \$374.7 million and in 2016; Congress appropriated only \$255 million, a reduction of more than 50 percent from prior years. The AHA has long advocated for fully funding the HPP at the authorized level of \$374.7 million and we continue to urge Congress to do so.

The AHA wants to ensure that the majority of HPP funding is awarded to hospitals, health systems and health care coalitions in order to enhance preparedness and surge capacity. That is why we believe it is important for the Comptroller General of the United States to review how HPP funds are being used and if they are meeting the purpose of providing hospitals and health systems with the ability to be prepared for emergencies and not being used for other purposes.



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We look forward to working with you to ensure hospitals and health systems across the country are prepared to respond to emergencies.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President