



**American Hospital  
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September 29, 2016

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
United States Senate  
109 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Roberts:

On behalf of our more than 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 43,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association is pleased to support the Craig Thomas Rural Hospital and Provider Equity Act of 2016 (R-HoPE), S. 3435, and applauds your commitment to America's rural health care providers and the communities they serve.

Your legislation would extend critical rural provisions that are set to expire or have expired and also implement new provisions which would benefit rural hospitals. For example, R-HoPE removes the "96-hour" Medicare condition of payment for critical access hospitals. Additionally, the bill provides regulatory relief for rural hospitals by including an enforcement moratorium on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' direct supervision policy for outpatient therapeutic services.

Rural hospitals face a unique set of challenges including workforce issues, constrained financial resources and increasingly burdensome federal regulations. Your legislation would provide significant needed relief to rural hospitals to ensure they can continue to care for the patients in their communities. Again, we are pleased to support S. 3435 and look forward to working with you to achieve its passage.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President

