

March 27, 2019

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

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) is pleased to support the Rural Hospital Regulatory Relief Act of 2019 (S. 895), which would permanently extend the enforcement moratorium on direct supervision requirements for outpatient therapeutic services provided in critical access hospitals and small, rural hospitals.

Your legislation would provide immediate and permanent regulatory relief to small, rural hospitals and ensure these communities will continue to have access to outpatient therapeutic services. As you know, these services have always been provided by licensed, skilled professionals under the overall supervision of a physician and with the assurance of rapid assistance from a team of caregivers, including a physician. While hospitals recognize the need for direct supervision for certain outpatient services that pose a high risk or are very complex, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services policy generally applies to even the lowest risk services.

The AHA applauds your continued leadership on behalf of rural hospitals and the patients and communities they serve. Again, we are pleased to support S. 895 and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to achieve its passage.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President

