

May 8, 2019

The Honorable Derek Kilmer  
1410 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kilmer:

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) writes in strong support of H.R. 2552, the “Protecting Local Access to Care for Everyone Act.” Your important and urgently needed bill would reverse harmful Medicare hospital payment rules that jeopardize access to care for our nation’s seniors.

With the expanded site-neutral policies now in place this year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has once again shown a lack of understanding about the reality in which hospitals and health systems operate daily to serve the needs of their communities. CMS has misconstrued congressional intent with its cut to payments for hospital clinic services in “excepted” off-campus provider-based departments (PBDs). Under Section 603 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, Congress clearly intended to preserve the existing outpatient payment rate for these excepted off-campus PBDs because of the critical role they play in their communities. But CMS’s rules for 2019 run counter to this, and instead will impede access to care for the most vulnerable patients. Your bill will restore the policy Congress intended and ensure that hospitals can continue to treat patients in the outpatient setting in their home communities.

The AHA commends you for your continued support of policies to ensure Medicare payments are adequate to cover the costs of providing care, and we look forward to working with you to secure enactment of H.R. 2552.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President

