

February 19, 2021

The Honorable Chris Murphy  
United States Senate  
136 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
United States Senate  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy and Senator Blunt:

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 support of your legislation, the Temporary Reciprocity to Ensure Access to Treatment (TREAT) Act.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented demands on the nation's health care system, and it also has changed the way people receive care. As a result of the adoption of technology, the need to maintain social distance and stay-at-home, there has been a high demand for telehealth visits. During COVID-19 spikes in certain areas of the country, there has been a need for additional health care providers to arrive from out of state to provide much needed care.

For patients, the need to continue to receive care remotely from their trusted health care provider is important for healthy outcomes. This is especially true of people seeking mental health services after being displaced from their community, such as a college environment. In addition, there are many types of other health care providers that can provide care remotely to help heal their patients.

Your legislation allows for the temporary reciprocity for treatment by medical professionals licensed in one state to patients in other states. It is limited in duration to the COVID-19 pandemic and only allows a health care professional to practice within their licensed scope of practice. It does not allow a health care professional to issue a prescription for a controlled substance without proper registration and in compliance with applicable regulations.

We applaud your leadership in providing flexibility for health care workers to cross state lines physically and virtually to provide care during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic continues to persist, one thing remains true – it's health care workers who are healing our patients and providing hope during this difficult time. We need as many of our health care providers as possible to provide care, regardless of their location.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President

