

October 27, 2021

The Honorable Chris Coons
United States Senate
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coons, Senator Booker and Senator Durbin:

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) applauds your leadership in addressing the mental health of communities across the nation. We are pleased to support your legislation, the Preventing and Addressing Trauma with Health Services (PATHS) Act (S. 2873).

Every day, hospitals and health systems provide critical, lifesaving care to victims of violence. However, when gun violence occurs, the victims are not limited to those killed or physically injured; the impact on families and the surrounding community can affect the health of the entire community. Numerous studies have documented the behavioral health effects on children and adolescents who have been exposed to violence.

Through the AHA's Hospitals Against Violence Initiative, our members share information about their work to help combat community violence using Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs). HVIPs work to reduce retaliation and recidivism by engaging patients in the hospital during their recovery. This valuable and effective work continues after patients are discharged, providing an important network of support during their outpatient care.

Your legislation would provide grants for high-quality, culturally competent trauma support and mental health services for individuals in communities affected by gun violence. The funds authorized by this bill could assist hospitals and health systems in advancing the work of HVIPs and their goal of fostering safer communities. We look forward to working with you to secure enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Stacey Hughes
Executive Vice President

