



AMERICA'S ESSENTIAL HOSPITALS

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**Statement on
The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (H.R. 2)**

**Statement attributable to:
Bruce Siegel, MD, MPH
President and CEO
America's Essential Hospitals**

WASHINGTON—"We thank House leaders for their leadership in moving to break the cycle of hospital cuts and physician uncertainty that has accompanied annual patches to the sustainable growth rate. Essential hospitals welcome this legislation and the stability it promises to return to our health care system, and we urge Congress to pass it swiftly.

We also appreciate lawmakers' recognition of the threat Medicaid disproportionate share hospital (DSH) cuts pose to vulnerable patients and the hospitals on which they depend. Twice already, Congress has delayed the onset of the Affordable Care Act's (ACA's) Medicaid DSH cuts. The additional year delay of DSH cuts in this bill would give essential hospitals vitally needed breathing room to survive uneven coverage expansion and persistently high levels of uncompensated care, and allow them to continue serving vulnerable patients.

Under this bill, the cuts over the next few years would be lower than the ACA's original reductions. But we are deeply concerned about the high level of DSH cuts this bill would require after 2020. These deep cuts would eliminate fully two-thirds of federal DSH support, an absolutely unsustainable policy. We urge Congress to work with essential hospitals to further delay and reduce these cuts, which would jeopardize access to care for vulnerable patients and put entire communities at risk.

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We also commend the House for proposing to extend funding for Medicaid Transitional Medical Assistance, the Medicare Qualified Individual Program, federally qualified health centers, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). While we support a longer extension for CHIP, we believe this bill, on balance, would advance care access and quality for millions of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries."

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About America's Essential Hospitals

America's Essential Hospitals is the leading association and champion for hospitals and health systems dedicated to high-quality care for all, including the most vulnerable. Since 1981, America's Essential Hospitals has initiated, advanced, and preserved programs and policies that help these hospitals ensure access to care. We support members with advocacy, policy development, research, and education.

Our more than 250 members are vital to their communities, providing primary care through trauma care, disaster response, health professional training, research, public health programs, and other services. They innovate and adapt to lead the broader health care community toward more effective and efficient care.