



## AMERICA'S ESSENTIAL HOSPITALS

June 20, 2014

Senator Joe Manchin  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mark Kirk  
524 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Bill Nelson  
716 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roger Wicker  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Manchin, Kirk, Nelson, and Wicker:

On behalf of America's Essential Hospitals (formerly the National Association of Public Hospitals) representing more than 220 hospitals nationwide, I am delighted to write in support of the *Hospital Readmissions Program Accountability and Improvement Act*.

Your forward-thinking legislation would ensure that hospitals caring for vulnerable patients are not unfairly penalized by the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP). Essential hospitals provide high-quality care to all, disproportionately serving the most vulnerable patients in the country. Despite our hospitals' success in providing effective care for those in greatest need and improving patient outcomes, there are many socioeconomic factors, including income, education and language barriers, which impact a patient's health. A growing body of peer-reviewed research has demonstrated that some vulnerable patients experience poorer health care outcomes despite the high quality of care they have received. Your legislation would incorporate risk adjustment for socioeconomic factors into the HRRP to prevent inequitable penalization of essential hospitals providing high quality care to vulnerable patients.

America's Essential Hospitals and our members are at the forefront of curbing readmissions and improving patient safety through our work of the Essential Hospitals Engagement Network (EHEN) as part of the federal Partnership for Patients initiative. Key accomplishments of the EHEN include reducing pressure ulcers by more than 25 percent and reducing central line-associated bloodstream infections by 40 percent. Of particular interest, hospitals participating in the EHEN saw an average reduction of more than 100 readmissions over the course of an 18 month period, saving payers more than \$22 million in total. Your bill will reduce the negative impact on hospitals serving vulnerable populations while allowing them to continue to make significant improvements and develop best practices for curbing readmissions and enhancing patient safety.

We applaud your commitment to ensuring essential hospitals may continue to provide high quality care to all patients and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Bruce Siegel, MD, MPH  
President and Chief Executive Officer

[essentialhospitals.org](http://essentialhospitals.org)

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