



AMERICA'S ESSENTIAL HOSPITALS

June 2015

OUR ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS

America's Essential Hospitals is the voice in Washington for hospitals committed to caring for vulnerable people. Our members also provide specialized services to all, such as level I trauma care; train health professionals; deliver comprehensive, coordinated care; and advance public health.

We support our members' innovative efforts to transform hospital care, and we advocate for strong, sustainable federal support for mission-driven hospitals. Our recent legislative and regulatory accomplishments include these:

Fighting Federal Cuts to Medicaid

America's Essential Hospitals has successfully delayed Affordable Care Act (ACA) cuts to Medicaid disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments for fiscal years 2014 to 2017, saving essential hospitals \$3.5 billion over these years. Cuts through 2020 are now substantially lower than those in the original law—from \$17.1 billion to \$9 billion today. We also successfully established an annual federal report on levels of uninsured and uncompensated care to provide an evidence base for DSH funding decisions.

Fostering Innovation in Medicaid Delivery

We support members' understanding of and participation in Medicaid delivery system reform incentive program (DSRIP) waivers. We promote information sharing among members and between members and key staff of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Educational components include extensive onsite programming at our annual conference, a dedicated annual waiver summit, numerous distance learning opportunities, and research and policy briefs.

Ensuring Equity in Incentive Programs

We strongly advocate for socioeconomic status (SES) risk adjustment in federal performance incentive programs, such as the Medicare Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP). We have worked with lawmakers over the past two years to introduce bipartisan, bicameral legislation to mandate SES risk adjustment in the HRRP.

We also work closely with the National Quality Forum and other stakeholders to reduce the potential for incentive programs to penalize essential hospitals for factors outside their control.

Realizing the Promise of Coverage Expansion

We are a diligent champion for access to health care and have worked to help realize the ACA's promise of broadly expanded insurance coverage. In our leadership role with the Partnership for Medicaid, a coalition of providers and health plans, we educate policymakers and advocate program improvements, such as the Partnership's proposal for consistent Medicaid quality standards across states.

Ensuring Access to Outpatient Care

America's Essential Hospitals has shielded members from site-neutral payment policies that would have reduced Medicare support for hospitals and threatened access to services—for example, cuts to outpatient evaluation and management services recommended by the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and considered by Congress as part of deficit reduction and other legislation.

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Protecting the 340B Drug Pricing Program

We advocate strongly for 340B and work to protect its benefits to low-income patients and their providers. In May 2015, America's Essential Hospitals turned back attempts to include a significant legislative revision of the program in a related and quickly moving bill. After aggressive advocacy by America's Essential Hospitals, lawmakers withdrew the 340B provisions, which would have severely restricted essential hospitals' participation in the program.

Preserving ACA Marketplace Participation

Responding to reports that qualified health plans in the ACA marketplace use various means to exclude member hospitals from provider networks, America's Essential Hospitals gathered data for a successful campaign to improve member participation in these plans. Our advocacy enhanced federal network adequacy requirements by increasing the mandatory percentage of essential community providers that plans must include.

Leading on Health Care in Key Social Issues

We advance members' interests in immigration reform by highlighting the need to bring health care issues into the debate—specifically allowing immigrants to access coverage more quickly. America's Essential Hospitals also developed principles on violence prevention and mental health, and advocated for enhanced access to mental health services for vulnerable people.

Raising the Visibility of Essential Hospitals

America's Essential Hospitals stands as the nation's foremost expert and trusted source on Medicaid and hospital care for vulnerable populations. Its brand underscores why communities must continue to invest in essential hospitals, even with expanding coverage under the ACA. Through proactive media campaigns, the association educates the nation about essential health systems and their patients. We also work with member hospitals to make their voices heard in local and national reports on hospitals and health care.

Learn More

Learn more about our work in Washington on behalf of essential hospitals and their patients. Visit essentialhospitals.org or contact us at GOV.admin@essentialhospitals.org or 202-585-0100.