

May 19, 2020

## Contact Your Senators and Urge Them to Support Hospitals and Health Systems — As Well As Their Caregivers and Patients — in the Next COVID-19 Relief Package

*Please reach out to your senators today as discussions are ongoing*

Congressional leaders continue to work on proposals for the next COVID-19 relief package. The House of Representatives May 15 passed the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act — a [\\$3 trillion COVID-19 relief package](#). The AHA [submitted comments](#) on a number of provisions included in the legislation.

The Senate will not take up the House legislation in its current form. Senate leaders have not committed to timing on the next COVID-19 relief legislation, but discussions are continuing. The four previous COVID-19 relief legislative packages came together quickly, so it is important to engage with your lawmakers immediately.

**Please contact your senators and ask them to include a number of important policies in the next COVID-19 relief package to support front-line health care personnel and providers — including hospitals, health systems, physicians and nurses.** It is imperative that Congress provides additional relief to hospitals and health systems, as an AHA [study](#) released this month estimates that hospitals and health systems will see more than \$200 billion in losses through June due to COVID-19.

**The following broad provisions that cut across AHA membership should be included in the relief package:**

- **additional support for health care heroes;**
- **forgiveness for accelerated payments;**
- **maintaining health benefits for individuals and families and increasing coverage options for those who are uninsured; and**
- **appropriate liability protections to front-line medical providers and facilities.**

More details and resources on these specific priorities are outlined below. The AHA also will urge Congress to take action on a number of other specific issues important to hospitals and health systems. **See the [AHA resource for the full list detailing those items](#).**

In addition, please encourage your senators to oppose any provision that would require new, unrealistic and burdensome Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. In particular, there was a provision included in the House legislation that would require the Secretary of Labor to promulgate an emergency temporary standard within seven days of enactment to protect from occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2 employees of the health care sector and emergency responder employers, as well as others with employees at occupational risk. **These provisions would be extremely difficult to implement in the midst of a global pandemic and could result in a confusing array of regulations and guidance.** [See more details.](#)

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON SPECIFIC PROVISIONS CONGRESS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THE NEXT COVID-19 RELIEF PACKAGE**

- **Federal Support for Health Care Heroes.** Please urge Congress to: provide support for child care, housing, transportation and education benefits for hospital workers; provide bonus pay for hospital workers; and establish a compensation fund for COVID-19 health care workers and their families. [View the AHA resource](#) for more details.
- **Accelerated Payment Forgiveness for Hospitals.** Congress should provide for full forgiveness of Medicare accelerated payments for hospitals. Forgiving hospitals' accelerated payments will provide a necessary solution to recover and rebuild while delivering the care that patients and communities are depending on. [View the AHA resource](#) for more details.
- **Increase Health Insurance Coverage.** Congress should take action to maintain health benefits for individuals and families and increase coverage options for those who are already uninsured by: providing employer subsidies for preserving enrollment; covering COBRA costs; opening a Special Enrollment Period for Health Insurance Marketplaces; increasing eligibility for federal marketplace subsidies; expanding the period during which insurers cannot cancel coverage for non-payment of premiums; and providing charity care tax credits for hospitals. [View the AHA resource](#) for more details.
- **Federal Liability Protections.** Congress should provide appropriate liability protections for facilities and front-line medical providers treating patients amid the COVID-19 crisis, for arranging for and providing health care services, including where treatment is provided, and how best to deploy personnel, equipment and facilities. [View the AHA resource](#) for more details.

### **Further Questions**

If you have questions, please contact AHA at 800-424-4301.