June 27, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 43,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) wishes to express our support for the Protecting Access to Care Act (H.R.1215), which is expected to be brought up for a vote on the House floor this week. This legislation would reduce health care costs and promote access to quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

The high costs associated with the current medical liability system not only harm hospitals and physicians, but also their patients and communities. Health care resources are diverted from patient care to a flawed liability system. Defensive medicine costs the health care system an estimated $50 to $100 billion annually. These costs do not primarily benefit the patient, but rather mitigate the risk of liability. To help make health care more affordable and efficient, the current medical liability system needs reform. The increased costs that result from the current medical liability system not only hinder access to affordable health care, they also threaten the stability of the hospital field, which employed more than 5.7 million people in 2015, and continues to be one of the largest sources of private-sector jobs.

The Protecting Access to Care Act is based on the proven model of reform, which was enacted decades ago in California. We applaud your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation and other proposals that will deliver meaningful medical liability reform.

Sincerely,

/s/
Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President

Cc: Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy
    Majority Whip Steve Scalise
    Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer