

December 7, 2023

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2434 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ann M. Kuster  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2201 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Guthrie and Kuster:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers — and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to support your legislation, the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act (H.R. 4531).

The AHA believes physical and mental health care are inextricably linked, and everyone deserves access to high-quality behavioral health care. We thank you for your leadership on legislation that will expand access to vital behavioral health services. Specifically, we are pleased to see this bill includes provisions to permanently extend Medicaid coverage for medication assisted treatments and to permanently extend the option for state Medicaid programs to receive federal matching payments for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment provided in certain institutions for mental diseases (IMDs) for up to 30 days over a 12-month period. For our members, this flexibility allows them to ensure patients receive the specific care they need. Both provisions take important steps forward in increasing access to SUD treatment services and reducing the stigma associated with seeking out the help that is needed.

SUD treatment requires access to the full continuum of care, including inpatient care, partial hospitalization, residential treatment and outpatient services. Different types of patients require different clinical services from across the care continuum, and the IMD exclusion currently excludes critical elements of that care continuum. IMD policy was established at a time when SUDs were not considered medical conditions on the same level as physical health conditions.

We thank you for your leadership in beginning to dismantle this discriminatory policy. As you know, there is still more work to be done to reduce barriers to receiving and administering behavioral health services, and we look forward to working with you on these future efforts.

Sincerely,

/s/

Lisa Kidder Hrobsky  
Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Political Affairs

