



June 23, 2014

## **Please Co-Sponsor the New, Bipartisan Hospital Readmissions Program Accuracy and Accountability Act**

Dear Senator Cochran:

Four of your colleagues (Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Bill Nelson (D-FL), and Mark Kirk (R-IL)) have introduced the Hospital Readmissions Program Accuracy and Accountability Bill, legislation to require the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to add a much-needed risk-adjustment component to the controversial Medicare Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program.

NAUH has been concerned from the start about the readmissions reduction program's bias against hospitals that care for especially large numbers of low-income patients. A number of academic studies have now confirmed this bias and urged policy-makers to address it. MedPAC, the independent agency that advises Congress on Medicare payment matters, has reached the same conclusion and recommended the same response.

Now, this new bipartisan bill would require CMS to address the program's shortcomings.

NAUH supports efforts to encourage hospitals to reduce avoidable readmissions of Medicare patients they have only recently discharged. But the kinds of patients served by private, non-profit urban safety-net hospitals located in low-income communities pose additional challenges that make it more likely that they will need to be readmitted. This bill would add risk adjustment to Medicare's current approach, a much-needed mechanism for reflecting the special challenges that hospitals like ours face. The program would still hold hospitals accountable for readmissions but would do so based on a better understanding of the distinct challenges some patients pose for their caregivers.

We ask you to sign onto the bill as a co-sponsor. To do so, please contact the office of one of the bill's sponsors: [Jonathan Kott](#) of Senator Manchin's staff; [Ryan Taylor](#) in the office of Senator Wicker; [Sasha Albohm](#) of Senator Nelson's staff; or [Danielle Varallo](#) in Senator Kirk's office.

The National Association of Urban Hospitals appreciates your consideration of this request and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about this issue or our position on it.

Sincerely,

Ellen Kugler, Esq.  
Executive Director

