

July 11, 2016

The Honorable Joe Pitts  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gene Green  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pitts and Ranking Member Green:

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) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments regarding actions Congress can take to strengthen our national trauma system, including the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2016 (H.R. 4365).

Hospital emergency departments (EDs) provide immediate care to the critically injured and ill. EDs stand always ready – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year – to deliver the most advanced medical care available in their communities. Emergency medical services (EMS) provide critical triage, treatment and transportation of patients to the ED to ensure access to life-saving care during medical emergencies.

EMS practitioners are often called on to administer medications during the crucial moments between when they first reach a patient and they arrive at an ED, with access to a wider range of emergency care services. H.R. 4365 would clarify that medications governed by the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) may be administered by EMS practitioners pursuant to a standing order issued by a physician medical director of an EMS agency. If EMS practitioners cannot rely on standing orders to authorize administration of medications governed by the CSA, treatment may be delayed for patients in pain or experiencing other significant symptoms.

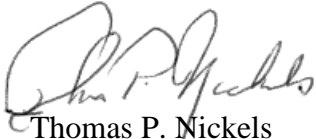
We applaud the Committee, Rep. Richard Hudson and Rep. G.K. Butterfield for your leadership in highlighting this important issue at your July 12 hearing, “Strengthening Our National Trauma System.” The AHA also looks forward to working with the Committee as H.R. 4365 moves through the legislative process and urges the Committee to address this to ensure access to emergency medications during EMS transport.



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Page 2 of 2

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on strengthening our nation's trauma system. The AHA looks forward to working with Congress, the Drug Enforcement Administration and all other stakeholders to ensure that EMS patients maintain appropriate access to medications governed by the CSA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas P. Nickels", written in a cursive style.

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President