



February 16, 2021

Wayne A. Smith
President & CEO

The Honorable Tom Carper
U.S. Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Carper,

On behalf of Delaware Healthcare Association, I am writing to ask for your support for hospitals and health systems in the next COVID-19 relief package.

We thank you for the relief funds that you and your colleagues were able to secure in previous relief packages, including the CARES Act. These funds have been a helpful bridge to ensure cash flow when Delaware hospitals faced financial losses. As our hospitals and health systems continue to recover, we respectfully request your assistance once again in advocating for Delaware's hospitals in the next COVID relief package.

Specifically, we urge that the following provisions be included in the next relief package:

- **Significant funding for COVID-19 vaccination** outreach, planning, administration and distribution efforts.
- **More funding for the Provider Relief Fund (PRF).** Given allocations made to date and COVID-19 relief legislation passed in December directing use of the funds, only \$4.4 billion will be available for disbursement to hospitals and health systems and other health care providers.
- **Forgiveness for Medicare accelerated payments for hospitals.** The CMS accelerated/advance payments provided to hospitals in 2020 served as critical life lines, but the requirement to repay these funds will place hospitals and health systems back in financial jeopardy while they continue to recover from this unprecedented pandemic.
- **Pause Quality Performance Penalties.** Congress should give CMS the flexibility to waive readmissions and Hospital-acquired Conditions (HAC) penalties for those fiscal years affected by COVID-19. Performance periods affected by COVID-19 are unlikely to be representative of hospitals true performance.
- **An extension of the moratorium on the Medicare sequester cuts.** In some cases, this 2% cut will effectively negate the Medicare inflation adjustment health care providers depend on and would otherwise receive in 2021.

In addition, we are aligned with the American Hospital Association in seeking as part of the legislation the following items: provide more support for state health programs, including Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP); include more federal support for front line health care workers; increase coverage options for those who are uninsured; and reset the

Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation (IMPACT) Act to reflect both new insights from the pandemic and the effect of recent transformative reforms of the existing post-acute care payment systems.

It also is important that Congress **not** include any provisions that would require new, unrealistic and burdensome Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne A. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W" and "S".

Wayne A. Smith
President & CEO

