



Contact: Marie Watteau, (202) 626-2351

STATEMENT ON HOUSE BUDGET PROPOSAL

**Rich Umbdenstock
President and CEO
American Hospital Association**

April 5, 2011

The impending budget crisis is real, and we all need to work together to lower the burden for future generations. This budget represents the next chapter in a discussion on the critical issues of our nation's fiscal stability. However, today's budget proposal by the House will severely impact access to care for our most vulnerable patients. While we recognize the serious fiscal challenges we face as a nation, this budget is not the right prescription for the health of America.

The AHA is extremely concerned about further reductions to Medicaid, a program vital to the health of children, the disabled and the elderly. Across the country, Medicaid has already been dramatically cut as states struggle to balance their budgets. Further cuts of \$771 billion over the next ten years would threaten this program, which is a lifeline to so many Americans.

The budget blueprint also wrongly rolls back expansions of health coverage to millions of people but keeps the \$155 billion in reductions to hospitals contained in the health reform law. Some Republican members of Congress have already questioned whether the cuts contained in the reform law would have compromised seniors' access to care.

Today, hospitals provide nearly \$40 billion in uncompensated care per year, and that number will grow if coverage is not expanded to those who cannot afford care. If coverage is not expanded and the government does not pay its fair share, hospitals will be forced to “cost-shift” or pass along the difference to the privately insured, exacerbating a “hidden tax” on families.

Lastly, America’s hospitals recognize that Medicare needs to be modernized. The premium support model outlined in the plan deserves significant consideration. As more details emerge, we will continue to discuss this option with both members and lawmakers.

Today’s budget puts us on the wrong path for the health of America. There are alternatives we support that have been proposed by various commissions. We know tough choices must be made, but America’s most vulnerable should not have to shoulder the burden.

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