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NAPH statement on Obama administration fiscal 2014 budget proposal

Statement attributable to:

Bruce Siegel, MD, MPH

President and Chief Executive Officer

National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems

WASHINGTON--"NAPH appreciates the administration's willingness to delay cuts to disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments until 2015, given the uncertain future of Medicaid expansion. But we're concerned the delay comes at the expense of higher DSH cuts the following two years and a \$3.6 billion baseline adjustment in 2023.

"The DSH reductions remain a looming threat to hospitals that care for our most vulnerable patients. Congress and the administration must repeal or reduce these damaging cuts and work toward a policy that achieves savings and recognizes the actual level of uncompensated care nationally. Further, savings from long-term baseline adjustments to DSH should be reinvested in the nation's safety net.

"NAPH also urges lawmakers and the White House to carefully weigh Medicare cost savings proposals against their potential to financially burden beneficiaries and their providers. In particular, we oppose the cuts to Medicare coverage of bad debt and to medical education payments--both would weaken the ability of hospitals to provide comprehensive services to communities and to train the next generation of physicians, nurses and allied health professionals.

"NAPH looks forward to working with policymakers on sensible solutions to the government's budget crisis that also preserve and enhance Medicaid and Medicare and ensure all people have access to high-quality health care when and where they need it most."

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About the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (NAPH)

NAPH represents the nation's safety net hospitals and health systems, which provide high volumes of care to low-income individuals. These facilities offer high-quality health services for all patients, including the uninsured and underinsured, regardless of ability to pay. In addition to helping ensure access to health care for all Americans, safety net hospitals provide many essential communitywide services, such as primary care, trauma care, and neonatal intensive care. Safety net hospitals also train many of America's doctors, nurses, and other health care providers. Since its inception in 1980, NAPH has cultivated a strong presence on Capitol Hill, with the executive branch, and in many state capitols. NAPH advocates on behalf of its members on such issues as Medicaid, Medicare, and access to health care services for vulnerable populations. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.naph.org/>.