

June 18, 2002

Honorable Nancy L. Johnson
 Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Health
 Committee on Ways and Means
 U.S. House of Representatives
 1136 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515-6349

Dear Congresswoman Johnson:

Kudos to you and to Ways and Means Committee members responsible for developing the Medicare payment legislation scheduled for committee mark-up today.

This legislation provides a measure of very necessary relief for providers and is a good first step in addressing payment equity issues that are a major problem, especially in upper Midwestern states like Wisconsin. We're especially pleased with the efforts of Congressman Paul Ryan and others to include provisions that eliminate the standardized amount differential.

We are also supportive of efforts to allow potential Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) to have "full flexibility" in gaining eligibility to this important program under the 25-bed cap. This modification would be a meaningful improvement to the "seasonal" variation language contained in the draft proposal and the 15 acute/10 "swing" bed standard found in current law.

We appreciate Congressman Ryan's interest in advancing this meaningful provision that will allow as many as 14 heavily Medicare-dependent, rural Wisconsin hospitals to achieve CAH status.

Kindest personal regards,



Steve Brenton
 President

c: Congressman Paul Ryan
 Wisconsin Rural Hospitals



Wisconsin Health &
 Hospital Association, Inc.

5721 Odana Road
 Madison, WI
 53719-1289

608/274-1820

FAX: 608/274-8554

<http://www.wha.org>