

May 26, 2021

The Honorable Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hassan and Collins:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) appreciates your continued leadership in promoting access to quality care in communities across the nation.

We support your bipartisan legislation, the Opioid Workforce Act of 2021 (S. 1438), which would help alleviate the critical shortage of opioid treatment providers by increasing resident physician slots in hospitals with programs focused on substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. As the nation continues to face a devastating public health crisis stemming from the opioid epidemic, we recognize that the shortage of SUD treatment providers results in lengthy waiting periods for treatment and increased mortality from opioid misuse and addiction.

Your legislation would address existing shortages by adding 1,000 Medicare-funded training positions in approved residency programs in addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry or pain medicine, with half of the new slots reserved for hospitals with established programs in these specialties and half reserved for hospitals that are in the process of establishing such programs.

These new slots would constitute a major step toward increasing access to SUD treatment for communities in need. We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Stacey Hughes
Executive Vice President

