

# Working for You

April 2025

Highlights from AHA's recent advocacy efforts on behalf of America's hospitals and health systems

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## Protecting Key Programs

### **A CONGRESSIONAL PACKAGE PASSED IN MARCH 2025 INCLUDED PROVISIONS THAT ADDRESSED KEY ISSUES FOR AHA MEMBERS:**

- Delaying Medicaid disproportionate share hospital cuts to September 30, 2025.
- Extending the Medicare-dependent hospital and enhanced low-volume hospital programs through September 30, 2025.
- Extending key telehealth waivers and the hospital-at-home program through September 30, 2025.
- Extending a 1.0 floor on the work Geographic Practice Cost Index (GPCI) through September 30, 2025.
- Extending add-on payment for ambulance services that support rural, "super-rural," and urban ambulance services through September 30, 2025.
- The package also did not include any site-neutral payment cuts or burdensome transparency provisions.

## Tackling Supply Chain Challenges

### **WHEN HURRICANE HELENE FORCED THE CLOSURE OF A MAJOR MEDICAL SUPPLY PLANT, THE AHA STEPPED IN WITH INFORMATION, ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT.**

- AHA executives met with policy makers to inform and educate them on the impact of the shortages.
- The AHA media relations team fielded numerous inquiries and coordinated interviews to educate the public.
- Regular briefings kept members informed and provided guidance on conservation strategies.

## Supporting the Field on Cybersecurity

### **THE AHA RESPONSE TO THE CHANGE HEALTHCARE CYBERATTACK, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CYBER BREACH IN HEALTH CARE HISTORY, MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR OUR MEMBERS.**

- Early action by the AHA informed members, the FBI, HHS and CISA to the severity of the issue.
- Continued pressure and information sharing with CMS helped secure an accelerated payment program for the field.
- Congressional testimony by the AHA highlighted the severity of the incident and the need for additional support.
- Grassroots lobbying brought the member voice to the forefront at a subsequent hearing with UnitedHealth Group CEO. Members of Congress are holding UnitedHealth Group accountable and long overdue questions about its outsized power and influence are being raised.
- Our public pressure and behind-the-scenes work ensured that UnitedHealth Group -- not hospitals and health systems -- would make all breach notifications to affected patients.
- In June, AHA worked with Microsoft, Google and the White House to provide free and discounted cybersecurity resources to assist rural hospitals; discussions continue about expanding enhanced cybersecurity support for all hospitals.

## In the Courts

### SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES ON SEVERAL FRONTS:

- In March 2025, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas ruled that the Food and Drug Administration does not have the authority to regulate laboratory-developed tests, negating a proposed rule that would have phased out the FDA's general enforcement discretion approach for most lab-developed tests. The AHA had expressed concerns about the proposed rule and urged the FDA not to apply it to hospital and health system lab-developed tests.
- In June 2024, a United States District Court Judge in Texas ruled in favor of the AHA, Texas Hospital Association, and hospital plaintiffs, agreeing that Department of Health and Human Services "bulletins" that restrict health care providers from using standard third-party web technologies that capture IP addresses on portions of their public-facing webpages were unlawful final rules.
- AHA's amicus brief played an important role in convincing the Supreme Court to take a case for the next term that could bring in more than \$1 billion annually for DSH hospitals.
- In August 2024, a federal court struck down a sweeping health care noncompete ban, agreeing with the AHA that the ban was "unreasonably overbroad" and that the FTC lacks authority to implement the regulations.

## Holding Commercial Insurers Accountable

### ADDRESSING PRIOR AUTHORIZATION ISSUES:

- In January 2024, CMS finalized a rule that requires commercial insurers to act faster on prior authorization requests, give a reason for denials, and update electronic systems to facilitate prior authorization. We continue to urge Congress to pass legislation that would codify and expand on parts of the rule.

## Achieving Regulatory Relief

### AN IMPORTANT EXTENSION:

- Thanks to AHA feedback in 2024, the EPA extended the compliance window from 18 months to two to three years on a rule that will reduce ethylene oxide emissions from commercial sterilization facilities.