

May 10, 2018

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
200 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Illinois Hospital Assessment Program

Dear Administrator Verma:

On behalf of the Illinois Health and Hospital Association's (IHA's) more than 200 hospital and nearly 50 health system members, we are writing to express IHA's strong support of the Illinois Hospital Assessment Program redesign currently before the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for approval. We urge CMS to review the plan favorably to preserve access to care for Illinois' Medicaid beneficiaries and their communities.

The state plan amendment submitted by the State of Illinois on March 30 reflects nearly a year of discussions between IHA, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, and a bipartisan work group of state legislators. The outcome of these negotiations resulted in a hospital assessment program that received overwhelming bipartisan support by Governor Bruce Rauner, the Illinois General Assembly, the Illinois Congressional Delegation and a unified hospital community.

As you know, the state plan amendment currently before CMS includes significant reforms to the current program. First, the plan updates patient utilization data for the first time in over 10 years reflecting the Medicaid program and its beneficiaries as it exists today. The program also shifts significant amounts of payments to a more dynamic system that more closely aligns reimbursement with actual services provided to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Illinois hospitals have been at the forefront of transforming the way care is delivered in our state. The hospital assessment program seeks to provide a stable pathway to help support hospitals as they continue to transform to best meet the needs of their communities.

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We are proud of the hospital assessment redesign currently pending at CMS, and believe that it will maintain access to care for Illinois' most vulnerable populations in urban and rural communities by prioritizing and providing key support for Safety Net and Critical Access Hospitals, a primary objective of the IHA Board of Trustees throughout the negotiations.

IHA stands ready to assist you and your team as you proceed with reviewing the Illinois state plan amendment. Please know that you can call on us as a resource at any time.

Thank you for your attention to this important program.

Sincerely,

William Santulli, Chair IHA Board of Trustees
Chief Operating Officer
Advocate Aurora Health

A.J. Wilhelmi
President & CEO
Illinois Health and Hospital Association