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STATEMENT ON THE LONG-TERM CARE HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENT ACT

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Today's bipartisan legislation is an important step forward in protecting patients' access to the critical services provided in long-term care hospitals (LTCHs). These hospitals provide vital care to clinically complex patients that require inpatient care for extended periods. We commend Senators Pat Roberts and Bill Nelson for their leadership on this issue.

Since 2004, Congress, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and other stakeholders have called for the development of patient and facility criteria that would define LTCHs and the type of patients they serve. Today's bill puts us on a path to finally establishing uniform patient and facility criteria that will distinguish LTCHs from all other provider settings. The new criteria will bring about a common definition for LTCH patients and services and solidify that access to care is based on patients' medical needs.

The bill also eliminates the 25 % Rule, a policy implemented by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in 2004 to limit patient access to LTCH services. Eliminating the 25% rule will ensure that patients are not prohibited arbitrarily from receiving needed care in LTCHs. This bill will replace blunt payment policies with comprehensive clinical criteria to ensure that LTCHs uniformly serve high acuity, patients. This will allow LTCHs to focus on their mission of caring for very sick patients who need intensive care for a long period of time.

We urge Congress to pass this important legislation that ensures patients receive the right care in the right setting.

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