



AMERICA'S ESSENTIAL HOSPITALS

May 6, 2024

The Honorable Peter Welch
United States Senate
124 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jacky Rosen
United States Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable J.D. Vance
United States Senate
288 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sens. Welch, Vance, Rosen, and Cramer:

On behalf of our more than 300 members, America's Essential Hospitals is pleased to support S. 3565, the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act. This bipartisan legislation will reappropriate \$7 billion for the Affordable Connectivity Program, which supports access to the high-speed internet necessary for work, school, and telehealth, for 23 million Americans.

America's Essential Hospitals is the leading association and champion for hospitals that provide safety net care for low-income and other disadvantaged patients. They deliver complex, lifesaving services, such as level I trauma and neonatal intensive care; train physicians and other health care professionals; meet public and population health needs; and coordinate care. Essential hospitals reach outside their walls to tackle social determinants of health, such as food insecurity and homelessness. Spurred by the pandemic, these hospitals have increasingly used telehealth to improve care and expand access.

Access to internet and broadband services is crucial to ensuring access to care and supports essential hospitals' safety net role. Through telehealth, essential hospitals offer routine and specialized care, remote patient monitoring after discharge, remote chronic care management, and psychiatric and substance use disorder treatment services at double the rate of other acute-care hospitals—in some cases, at an even higher rate.

Essential hospitals continually work to expand coverage and improve health outcomes, and we believe this legislation is crucial to connecting health care providers to all people, regardless of socioeconomic barriers to treatment. We thank each of you for your efforts to make care more equitable and accessible in our country.

Sincerely,

Bruce Siegel, MD, MPH
President and CEO