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Suite 210  
Washington, D.C. 20001

October 8, 2015

The Honorable Jim Renacci  
328 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington D.C., 25015

The Honorable Eliot Engel  
2462 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Renacci and Representative Engel,

On behalf of VHA, I am writing to offer our strong support for H.R. 1343, the Establishing Beneficiary Equity in the Hospital Readmission Program Act. VHA is a national network of hospitals and healthcare providers dedicated to leading health care innovation, creating knowledge and fostering collaboration to help our members thrive. VHA serves 5,200 health system members and affiliates as well as 118,000 non-acute health care customers. Members range from independent, community-based health care organizations to large, integrated systems and academic medical centers.

Your legislation is vital to ensuring that hospitals across the country are treated fairly under the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program and are not unduly penalized based on the patients they serve. Since the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program was first launched, hospitals have raised serious concerns that it was unfairly penalizing hospitals that treat underprivileged patients. With mounting evidence from academic research that the program is disproportionately penalizing hospitals that serve vulnerable and underprivileged populations, it is past due that the program be modified to correct this structural failing. Your legislation takes the necessary steps to require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to account for sociodemographic status in determining the penalties for the program.

Hospitals across the country strive to deliver the best possible care to every patient they treat. In support of that effort, hospitals have been investing significant resources in quality improvement, care coordination, discharge planning and other steps to improve care and prevent readmissions. Passing your bill would ensure that those hospitals, and the patients they serve, are treated fairly while still maintaining the intended accountability for stopping truly preventable readmissions.

We support your effort, and strongly urge passage of H.R. 1343. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [egoodman@vha.com](mailto:egoodman@vha.com) or (202) 354-2607 if there is anything we can do to help advance this important legislation for hospitals and patients across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward N. Goodman".

Edward N. Goodman  
Vice President, Public Policy