



June 29, 2009

The Honorable Bruce L. Braley
1019 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Braley:

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) is pleased to support H.R. 2891, the 'Access to Frontline Health Care Act of 2009.' We believe this bill marks an important step forward in addressing pharmacy workforce challenges. By allowing pharmacy students to participate in the loan repayment program, this bill would help decrease the health care workforce shortages that are particularly challenging in rural and underserved areas.

ASHP represents pharmacists who practice in hospitals and health-systems. The Society's 35,000 members include pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who practice in a variety of health system settings, including inpatient, outpatient, home care, and long-term-care settings, as well as pharmacy students. ASHP is the only national organization of hospital and health-system pharmacists and has a long history of improving medication use and enhancing patient safety. Pharmacists in hospitals and health systems are experts in medication use who serve on interdisciplinary patient-care teams. They work with physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals to ensure that medicines are used safely, effectively, and in a cost-conscious manner.

As the nation's third largest health profession, pharmacists are on the frontline of care and are typically the health professional the patient sees most often. As a result, it is critical that we strive to ensure an adequate supply of well educated and well trained pharmacists as the nation looks to reform its health care system. A recently published report by the Health Workforce Information Center titled "The Adequacy of Pharmacist Supply: 2004 to 2030," shows that there is still a shortage of pharmacists nationwide (<http://www.healthworkforceinfo.org/topics/resources.php?id=118>).

ASHP thanks you for introducing this bill and we look forward to working with your office to include it within the larger health care reform proposal under construction. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like any follow up information, please have your staff contact Joseph Hill, Director, Federal Legislative Affairs at: 301/664-8710, or jhill@asho.org.

Sincerely,

Henri R. Manasse, Jr., Ph.D., Sc.D
Executive Vice President and CEO

TOGETHER WE MAKE A GREAT TEAM