



June 15, 2016

Chairman Kevin Brady  
House Ways & Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1106 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Sander Levin  
House Ways and Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1139E Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Tiberi  
Health Subcommittee  
House Ways & Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1106 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Ranking Member McDermott  
Health Subcommittee  
House Ways and Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1139E Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: H.R. 5273, the Helping Hospitals Improve Patient Care Act (HIP-C)**

Dear Chairmen Brady and Tiberi and Ranking Members Levin and McDermott:

On behalf of our members and the patients we serve, thank you for passage of H.R. 5273, the Helping Hospitals Improve Patient Care Act (HIP-C). We greatly appreciate that the legislation included a bipartisan, common-sense solution to improve the Medicare Hospital Readmission Reduction Program (MHRRP), addressing transplant as eligible for exemption from the MHRRP program.

We strongly supported the original readmission legislation advanced by Representative Renacci (R-OH) that provided a direct exemption for transplant. We also appreciated the subsequent legislation for a broader socioeconomic exemption and recognize that the language in the legislation passed by the full committee this May is a compromise between the two. As we read it, the language would allow the secretary to remove certain groups from the MHRRP penalties, with transplant listed as the first category for Secretarial consideration for exclusion.

Clinical research shows that high readmission rates for transplant do not mean poor quality care. In fact, our patients are among some of the most fragile in all of medicine and readmissions are not only necessary for our patients but can mean the difference between life and death. Our profession is also unique in how we measure, evaluate, and address the science of transplant, including readmissions. Since 1987, we have used the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) an ever-expanding national database of transplant statistics that is open to the public. This registry

---

**American Society of Transplant Surgeons**

**Timothy L. Pruett, MD, President** • **Sherilyn A. Gordon-Burroughs, MD, Chair, Legislative Committee**  
2461 S. Clark Street • Suite 640 • Arlington, VA 22202 • PH: 703-414-7870 • Email: [asts@asts.org](mailto:asts@asts.org)  
Contact: Kim Gifford, MBA, Executive Director • [kim.gifford@asts.org](mailto:kim.gifford@asts.org)

supports ongoing review of the scientific and clinical status of solid organ transplantation and information on the full continuum of transplant activity related to organ donation, wait-list candidates, transplant recipients, and survival statistics. This information is used to help develop evidence-based policy, support analysis of transplant programs, and encourage research on issues of importance to the transplant community.

The American Society of Transplant Surgeons represents more than 1,500 professionals dedicated to excellence in transplantation surgery. Our mission is to advance the art and science of transplant surgery through leadership, advocacy, education, and training. ASTS members are committed to providing the best medical care possible to their patients.

Thank you for your efforts. We look forward to continued work to advance the HIP-C legislation to passage in the House and Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy L. Pruett". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Timothy L. Pruett, MD  
President

Cc: Representative Jim Renacci  
Representative Elliot Engel