

# TRAUMA CENTER ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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March 7th, 2011

## TCAA Members Press Congress to Fund Trauma Centers and Systems

TCAA's February 16 Lobby Day was a big success thanks to the participation of 20 TCAA Board Members and members who traveled to Washington for a full day of meetings on Capitol Hill. Over the course of the day, TCAA members met with more than 60 Congressional offices and urged their Members of Congress to fund the trauma programs contained in the National Trauma Center Stabilization Act and the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act, as authorized by the Public Health Service Act. TCAA members explained that while we recognize the difficult challenges that Congress will face during this year's appropriations process, these programs represent a prudent investment of relatively modest resources that will yield immense returns in efficiencies, economies of scale and public health and safety. Members and staff alike learned about the immense economic pressures facing trauma centers and the fact that at least 23 trauma centers have closed in the past decade, as well as, the startling public health problem that 45 million Americans do not have access to a Level I Trauma Center within the critical "golden hour".

Other national associations will be carrying a similar message during their upcoming advocacy events in Washington, and TCAA is working closely with these groups to continue to press Congress to fund the trauma programs. In addition, together with our colleagues at the ACS, ACEP, AANS, AAOS, NRHA, ACCT and Advocates for EMS, TCAA is continuing to lobby the Administration to use some of its discretionary funding for these programs, which would provide grant funding to Trauma Centers, help States develop trauma systems, and work to pilot regionalized systems of emergency care.

If you were unable to join us for TCAA's Lobby Day, please log on to our web site at [www.traumafoundation.org](http://www.traumafoundation.org) and use the online legislative software ("SoftEdge™") to send a message to the President, your Governor, and your Members of Congress, urging them to fund the trauma provisions. Your advocacy makes all the difference!

## TCAA Responds to Federal Regulatory Proposals with Impact on Trauma Care

As the Administration works to implement the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) continues to release a number of proposed regulations of importance to the trauma community. In particular, CMS has released a proposed rule related to the implementation of the Medicare Inpatient Value Based Purchasing (VBP) program contained in the ACA. Under the statute, the program will link Medicare inpatient payments to quality performance, putting up to 2% of inpatient payments at risk over time. Hospitals will be eligible to earn back these dollars based on both achievement and improvement of quality indicators. TCAA is in the process of developing its comments for Board approval, and has been consulting with its colleagues at the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (NAPH) and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) about ways to draw particular attention to the need for risk-adjustment factors that take into consideration the unique characteristics of trauma patients. Comments are due March 8.

TCAA also recently submitted comments on the Advanced Proposed Notice of Rulemaking (APNRM) regarding a potential application of the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) to hospital inpatients. In its comments to CMS, TCAA explained that if CMS applies EMTALA in the inpatient setting, TCAA is concerned about the implications it may have on the initial hospital receiving the patient, particularly non-trauma hospitals or Level III or IV trauma centers that have marginal resources or less than 24/7 specialist coverage. TCAA therefore urged the agency to maintain the current interpretation that EMTALA does not apply to any inpatient.

As CMS releases additional proposed rules related to the ACA, TCAA will be working with the regulatory agencies and Congress to urge policymakers to take into consideration the unique nature of trauma care. In addition to VBP, TCAA is closely tracking forthcoming demonstration programs to test bundled Medicare or Medicaid payments for select episodes of care, as well as Medicare penalties for certain preventable hospital readmissions, and will keep members apprised of opportunities to submit their own comments to CMS as well.

