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April 8, 2014

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives
2336 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Burgess:

On behalf of the Emergency Nurses Association, the only professional nursing association dedicated to emergency nursing, I am writing in support of H.R. 4080, the Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Act. I also wanted to thank you for your leadership on this issue and for sponsoring this legislation.

Trauma care is a major public health issue. It is the leading cause of death in the United States for people under the age of 45 and fourth leading cause of death for all ages. Each year, approximately 35 million Americans are treated for traumatic injuries. At an annual cost of more than \$67 billion, it ranks third only behind heart disease and cancer in terms of healthcare expenditures.

Nevertheless, there are major shortfalls in our trauma care system. Forty-five million people do not currently have access to a major trauma center within the critical “golden hour” following an injury. This lack of access has tragic repercussions for patients. The risk of death for severely injured patients treated at a Level 1 trauma center is 25 percent less than for those treated in a non-trauma hospital.

Despite the well-documented benefits of trauma centers for patient outcomes, forty-two states lack fully developed trauma systems. Moreover, at least twenty-one trauma centers have closed in the past decade and 30 percent closed from 1990 to 2005.

H.R. 4080 addresses the need to improve our country’s trauma and emergency care programs. The legislation supports grants for states to develop integrated and comprehensive trauma systems, as well as pilot projects to design and implement regional emergency care systems. The passage of H.R. 4080 will be an important step forward in improving trauma care and saving lives of severely injured patients.

Again, thank you for introducing the Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Act and your leadership on this important healthcare issue.

Sincerely,

Deena Brecher, MSN, RN, APN, ACNS-BC, CEN, CPEN
2014 ENA President