



For Immediate Release

Media Contact

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Sara Skubikowski: (202) 466-8700

Senate Moves Closer to Bipartisan Passage of Bill Prioritizing Critical Care Planning

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy today praised Senate leaders of pandemic preparedness reauthorizing legislation for including critical care as an essential component of national preparedness. “This morning, the Senate brought us another step closer to enacting the first piece of legislation that would prioritize critical care in federal disasters efforts,” said Roundtable Board Member Dr. Brad Poss. Poss, a pediatric critical care specialist and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita, noted that it has taken the Roundtable on Critical Care Policy since 2009 to secure language in federal pandemic preparedness laws to recognize the important role of critical care in federal health care delivery and in the delivery of care during a disaster. “Nearly five million critically ill and injured Americans depend on the critical care delivery system each year, yet capacity is often stretched to its limits. We must address the uniquely important challenges and needs of our critical care infrastructure so that we are truly prepared for the possibility of a national health emergency,” Poss said.

Vicky Kark, a critical care nurse from Silver Spring, Maryland who co-chairs the Roundtable’s National Preparedness & Infrastructure Working Group, added, “Care providers on the front lines during catastrophic events have seen that effective planning makes a tremendous difference in saving patients’ lives. Many of us have personally seen the dire consequences of overlooking the critical care delivery system in these planning efforts.”

This morning, the powerful and influential Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee mark-up of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) Reauthorization of 2011 (S. 1855) brought together a bipartisan group of Senators committed to enhancing the nation’s ability to care for the critically ill and injured. The manager’s amendment adds the critical care system to the National Health Security Strategy’s medical preparedness goals, ensuring that critical care is prioritized in planning efforts to increase preparedness, response capabilities, availability, coordination and accessibility with respect to public health emergencies – a key Roundtable-endorsed provision.

“Members of the Senate have responded to the perspectives of practitioners that provide specialized, high quality health care for the critically ill and injured,” Dr. Poss said. “We appreciate their willingness to work with the Roundtable on Critical Care Policy over the last several months to incorporate this key enhancement to the National Health Security Strategy.”

The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy applauds the bipartisan efforts of the Senate HELP Committee for taking this important step and ensuring that critical care is given sufficient consideration in future planning efforts, and for their work to improve coordination and collaboration between the public and private sector – particularly as it relates to pandemic and medical surge planning efforts. The Roundtable believes that the bill builds on lessons learned over the past five years and will provide more support for public and the private sector to work together to ensure an effective medical response.

The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy is a nonprofit advocacy organization that provides a collaborative forum for leaders in critical care and public health to advance a common federal policy agenda to improve the quality, delivery and efficiency of critical care in the United States.

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