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## Statement from the Massachusetts Hospital Association on the State Legislature's Final 2012 Healthcare Bill July 31, 2012

"The legislature has worked long and hard to produce a bill that seeks to build on the considerable progress already being made to reform the healthcare payment systems. We commend the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the Governor for their leadership and efforts. In particular, we want to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of Senator Moore, Representative Walsh and the members of the conference committee who have worked so hard to forge a common vision out of very complex bills. We have great hopes and expectations that the bill will be successful and we are committed to working with the state to ensure that success.

No doubt, the bill sets out difficult challenges that will have to be met if we are to improve the delivery and affordability of healthcare while continuing to support a recovering economy. While hospitals will do their part to get healthcare cost growth to the level of the economy, with increasing demands on healthcare such as the aging population and obesity epidemic, doing so by 2013 will be daunting. We remain opposed to the addition of costs on certain hospitals through the imposition of surcharge assessments and will continue to advocate that the additional cost of implementing the bill not be placed upon providers who are already working diligently to lower costs.

The final bill is very comprehensive and we are still reviewing the details and analyzing the impacts. In large part this legislation appears to achieve a balance that will advance meaningful payment and delivery system reform. Its focus on patient-centered care and transparency is in line with recent healthcare system developments and offers great promise.

As we look to improve the efficiencies in delivering care and stabilizing the delivery system, it is critically important for the state to fulfill its commitment to adequately pay for care that is provided to those enrolled in its programs. For struggling hospitals that rely to a great extent upon government payment for the care services they provide, there needs to be a permanent solution found, and quickly.

As we look down the road at the regulatory process that will turn legislation into rules, we want to be sure that such rules support flexible and efficient changes in the healthcare system and do not unintentionally create barriers that will hinder progress and increase costs. We look forward to working with the legislature and administration throughout the implementation process to ensure the minimization of job loss and unnecessary administrative costs and red tape.

Massachusetts hospitals remain committed to continuing our progress and leadership on reform and reducing costs in the system. It took a strong commitment and collaboration from many parties to produce this bill and it will take similar commitment and collaboration to wisely implement the provisions. Accordingly, we appreciate the legislature's continued willingness to listen to the perspective of the hospital community as we continue along this path."

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