

# The NUNES Report

## Rule change helps health centers

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Stemming from legislation introduced by Rep. Devin Nunes, federal health officials announced a rule change that gives hospitals more options in how they handle patients who enter the emergency room with non-urgent medical needs.

Federal law (Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, or EMTALA) requires hospital emergency rooms to treat everyone regardless of their ability to pay, a provision that often strains medical resources because of patients who seek help for non-urgent needs.

The rule change made by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will allow hospitals to screen patients entering their emergency room and divert those whose medical needs are not urgent to other health care services within the hospital or outside medical services.

Mr. Nunes sought this flexibility earlier this year with a bill he introduced as a result of a regional health care summit. His legislation was later folded into the national Medicare bill.

"I'm gratified the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recognize that our emergency rooms are in dire need of help," said Mr.



**Rep. Nunes with Harry Foster the CEO of Family Healthcare based in Visalia and a number of friends and constituents**

Nunes, who is a member of the Prescription Drug Action Team in the House. "This change in the regulations is a step in the right direction. It continues to ensure people will get the appropriate medical treatment regard-

less of their ability to pay, while at the same time giving health officials more flexibility in handling increasing numbers of patients."

The rule change goes into effect Nov. 10.

### Quick Facts

**In September, Rep. Nunes wrote to 1,034 constituents in response to their inquires. Year to date, Rep. Nunes has responded to 9,341 constituents via the U.S. Mail.**