

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 09, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader  
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Capitol Building, H-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Democratic Leader  
U.S. Capitol Building, S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer:

As members of the California delegation, we thank you for your consistent support of Community Health Centers (CHCs) as part of the COVID-19 response packages. We can all agree that CHCs are vital providers in our communities and Congress needs to help them stay solvent in these unprecedented times. We were pleased that a separate bucket of funding for CHCs was included in H.R. 6800, the Heroes Act, and urge you to maintain this funding in any final bill that goes to the President's desk for signature.

Like Community Health Centers around the country, California's CHCs have experienced a significant drop in revenue due to the postponement or cancellation of non-essential services. In response to these revenue losses, health centers are facing difficult financial decisions that could hurt future access to health care for the population that they serve. To keep Community Health Centers solvent, there is an urgent need for an additional infusion of emergency funding, as well as continued support for their operational needs.

Across the nation, nearly 30 million people rely on Community Health Centers for their care. In California, health centers serve 7.2 million patients annually - almost 17% of our constituents. During a public health emergency, health centers provide triage, treatment, and referrals in addition to working in partnership with the local health departments and the state of California. This crisis is no different - CHCs are uniquely positioned to assist in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 because they are rooted in the communities they serve and are trusted sources of care for anyone that walks through their doors.

Health centers are implementing drive-up, walk-up, and mobile COVID-19 testing centers, and they are working with local health departments to bring testing to the homeless populations throughout California. It is essential that emergency funding for CHCs can be used to cover losses attributable to COVID-19, as well as the costs of testing and treatment. This will enable health centers to re-employ staff in an effort to continue to expand services and outreach and to respond to COVID-19. This is especially critical as more and more people lose their jobs and become eligible for Medi-Cal. CHCs anticipate that their patient caseload will increase significantly as a result.

**As you continue to negotiate the next relief package, we urge you to maintain the requested \$7.6 billion funding stream included in the House-passed Heroes Act.**

Additionally, as more telehealth is utilized during this crisis, health centers are working to expand their telemedicine capabilities so that they can continue to treat our most vulnerable constituents for their chronic conditions while maintaining the ability to treat COVID-19 patients. **We ask that you include a minimum of \$1 billion for telehealth infrastructure projects at CHCs in the final relief package.**

We are also aware that care needs will drastically shift as we aim towards a new normal – balancing COVID-19, preventative, and routine care. **Because of the anticipated increase in patients that we expect to see coming through health center doors in the coming months, we ask that you provide a minimum of \$1 billion in emergency workforce funding so that health centers are able to maintain sufficient staffing levels.**

To further support workforce maintenance, we request an exemption for organizations with more than 500 employees. Across the country, roughly 100 health center organizations have more than 500 employees, but they are often deployed across multiple sites. They are ineligible for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or Emergency Paid Leave Program due to their total number of employees. **We encourage you to enable health center organizations to count employees per physical location when determining eligibility**, as is allowed for businesses in the accommodation and food industries.

As you know, state budgets are suffering during the COVID-19 crisis with losses in tax revenue and additional financial burdens places on the states. California's revised budget released last week includes dramatic cuts that would severely impact the health care safety net, so we **urge to you to help us avoid additional cuts by prioritizing the assistance for state and local governments that was included in the Heroes Act as Congress works to negotiate a final bill.**

Finally, we understand that the COVID-19 relief package that is currently being negotiated is focused on immediate needs related to the pandemic. However, funding for health centers, National Health Service Corps, and the Teaching Health Center GME Program is scheduled to expire at the end of November, right when many experts predict we will have a second, potentially worse, COVID-19 wave. **We therefore ask that you extend this funding for five years well in advance of the November 30 deadline, so that CHCs around the country will be able to continue their COVID-19 response without having to worry about long-term planning.**

Thank you for your consideration and for all of the work you are doing to ensure that our frontline workers have the resources that they need as they continue to serve our communities.

Sincerely,



Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

/s/

Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

/s/

Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

/s/

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

/s/

Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

/s/

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

/s/

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

/s/

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

/s/  
TJ Cox  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Anna Eshoo  
Member of Congress

/s/  
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress

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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress

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Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

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Jimmy Panetta  
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/s/  
Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress

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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress

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Harley Rouda  
Member of Congress

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Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

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Adam Schiff  
Member of Congress

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Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

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Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress

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Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress