

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington DC 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma,

Americas hospitals are facing an unprecedented crisis as the COVID-19 caseload surges to over 215,000 patients across the nation. To respond, facilities have tried to expand their capacity, stock up on supplies, and increase staffing, all without the income they rely on from other care to support their skyrocketing costs.

In some cities, hospitals are in dire conditions with full ICUs and dwindling supplies of personal protective equipment and ventilators. In the coming months, hospitals will be facing shortfalls of hundreds of millions of dollars and may struggle to pay the same health care workers risking their own safety to provide life-saving care on the frontlines.

Congress recognized this tremendous need with the passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that designated an additional \$100 billion for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. This emergency fund will assist health care providers and suppliers prevent, prepare for, and respond to the spread of COVID-19 across the nation.

This \$100 billion will help hospitals and others cover costs for building temporary hospitals, expanding treatment facilities, buying much-needed personal protective equipment and necessary medical supplies, conduct more testing, training specialized workers, and increase their workforce to respond to surging caseload.

The CARES Act directs this funding to be distributed on a rolling basis to get support to the front lines of this crisis as quickly as possible—yet hospitals have not yet received the aid they desperately need.

We understand there are difficult decisions to be made as to how this funding will be allocated, but we encourage you to work as quickly as possible and distribute funds directly to providers. Continued delays in aid reaching hospitals is going to endanger the lives of patients and health care workers.

We urge the Department of Health and Human Services to manage distribution swiftly, with consistent criteria, to allocate funding directly to hospitals and essential health care providers, particularly “hotspots” facing large COVID-19 caseloads and facilities in underserved communities. Funds distributed quickly can be reconciled at a later date but the consequences in delay could be disastrous.

Thank you for your ongoing work on behalf of all Americans during this crisis. We appreciate your support for the hospitals and health care providers on the front lines of COVID-19 prevention and response.

Sincerely,

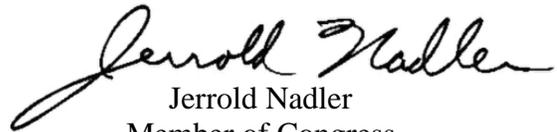


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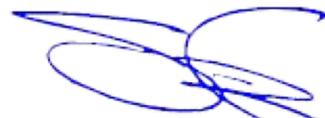
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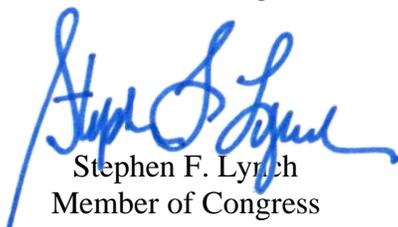
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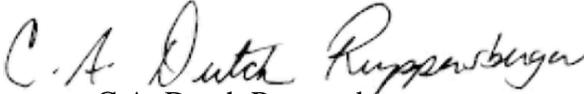


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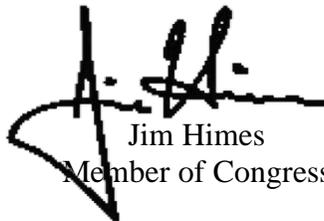


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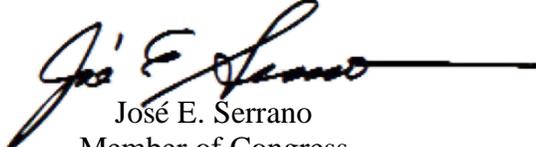
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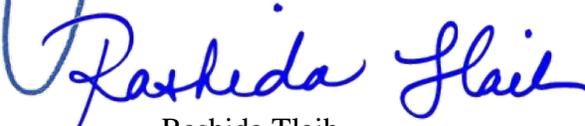
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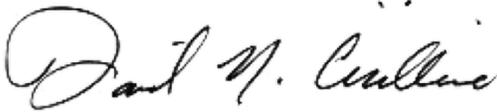
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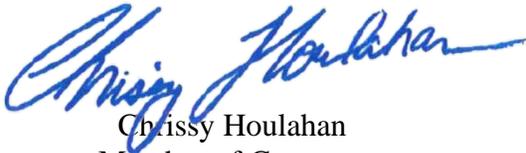
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