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

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, US House  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader, US Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader, US House  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Democratic Leader, US Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 20, 2020

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

The undersigned Members of Congress write to urgently request that you provide additional critically needed resources to support the nation's community health center infrastructure during the COVID-19 crisis. As an example, California's community health centers provide health care services to 1 in 3 Medicaid recipients and 1 in 6 Californians. Health centers are on the frontlines of this crisis, and are a critical component of our nation's response to containing and controlling the spread of COVID-19. Now more than ever, they must have the resources and support they need to serve their patients and communities, and help relieve the burden on our emergency rooms and hospitals.

Health centers are struggling with a number of challenges during this crisis.

- Health centers do not have sufficient testing supplies, and they are experiencing delays from vendors and labs.
- Health centers cannot obtain enough personal protective equipment. While some regions have systems and structures in place to distribute supplies—backlogs, severe shortages and logistical challenges persist. Health centers are scouring online vendors and other non-traditional sources to try to procure the supplies they need.
- Health centers' call centers are overwhelmed with inquiries from both patients and non-patients seeking answers to questions, reassurance, and asking for testing. The increased call

- volume comes as health centers are trying to protect their own staff by implementing social distancing measures, relocating staff, implementing remote work policies, and contending with staff facing childcare challenges due to school closures.
- Health centers are setting up exterior screening areas and in some cases isolation areas, to protect staff and other patients from those who may be infected with the coronavirus.

Critically, clinics are experiencing declining Medicaid revenue at the exact same time they are making significant unbudgeted outlays for emergency equipment and supplies. Health centers' normal Medicaid visit numbers are declining as patients stay home and the centers curtail non-urgent services. For example, health centers in California are reporting visits decreasing 50 percent. This translates into a loss of \$34.5 million in Medicaid revenue *each week* during this crisis. This is not sustainable.

Our nation's health centers are working tirelessly to support the COVID-19 response, limit the spread of the virus and support their staff, patients and communities. As this crisis intensifies, the health care system will be depending on community health centers to help reduce the burden on hospitals and emergency rooms. Health centers should not be worried about financial stability and how they are going to keep their doors open, their lights on, and their staff employed during this crisis.

We thank you for the \$100 million already allocated to health centers in the bipartisan package passed earlier this month, but providing additional robust emergency funding and securing the long-term financial stability of health centers must continue to be a top priority as additional stimulus packages are developed and negotiated.

Regards,



Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



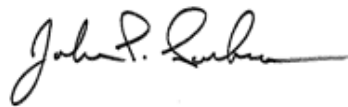
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



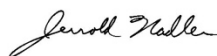
Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



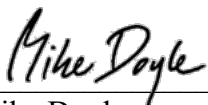
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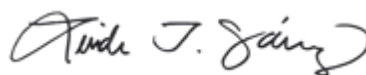
Mark Veasey  
Member of Congress



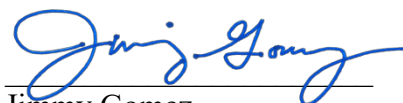
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