

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan, Chair
The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Vice Chair
National Governors Association
444 N. Capitol St. NW, Ste. 267
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Governors Hogan and Cuomo,

Thank you for your leadership in fighting for the nation's health and safety during this unprecedented crisis. As governors, you have seen first-hand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our communities and on the health system. As chairs of the National Governors Association (NGA), you are well-positioned to promote policies that support the public health needs of our communities and prioritize funding for our frontline community-based health care providers.

In a public health crisis, the health care system works together to ensure that everyone has access to the testing, diagnosis and treatment they need to be safe and healthy. We the undersigned 128 organizations write today in support of our nation's Community Health Centers who continue to serve low-income individuals regardless of their ability to pay. Health centers play a unique role in the fight against COVID-19. They provide testing, early intervention, and primary treatment for their patients. By supporting patients who do not need hospital-level care for COVID-19, Community Health Centers reduce the overcrowding of hospitals. They also reduce unnecessary hospitalizations by controlling chronic health conditions and reduce Emergency Department visits by keeping their doors open longer and on weekends.

Health centers provide care to vulnerable and underserved populations, particularly for rural, low-income, and communities of color and patients with limited English proficiency. Health centers deliver evidenced-based care in a linguistically and culturally appropriate way and address underlying social determinants of health, such as food insecurity, to reduce impacts on physical and behavioral health. This helps slow the spread of the virus and keeps more individuals safe and healthy. Finally, as a trusted member of the community, health centers provide care to individuals who are most susceptible to racial and economic barriers to care that make many fearful of engaging with health care providers.

The federal emergency funding designated for health centers in the recent CARES Act passed by Congress has helped support health centers pivot to their immediate COVID-19 response; however, Congress has not yet done enough to make sure that their doors will be open when the pandemic ends. With increasing unemployment and neighbors without health insurance, Community Health Centers need to increase their capacity to care for current and new patients. The undersigned organizations ask for support from the NGA to prioritize funding and allocation of resources for health centers so that they can continue to serve their communities, reduce the burden on hospitals, and to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. Specifically, we encourage the NGA to:

- Advocate for inclusion of additional funding for health centers in any future Congressional action to address the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Emphasize to Congress and the Administration the importance of prioritizing funding and services for Medicaid providers who are the safety net for our most vulnerable patients, including by:

- Ensuring that a proportionate amount of the remaining \$70 billion in the CARES Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF) administered by the Department of Health and Human Services goes to Medicaid providers,
- Further increasing the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for Medicaid by 5.8 percent, for a total increase of 12 percent;
- Preventing implementation of the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation (MFAR);
- Ensure that all uninsured patients have access to and coverage for testing and treatment of COVID-19 symptoms and related health conditions, to include vaccines when available.
- Educate state agencies about how federal funding can be used to support health centers;
- Provide specific guidance to states about prioritizing distribution of needed protective supplies and equipment for health centers; and
- Recognize the importance of culturally competent and linguistically appropriate care in educating patients about their health and safety—and make additional funding available to health centers to support these enabling services.

We appreciate your leadership, and the leadership of all governors, in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge you to continue supporting our nation’s Community Health Centers and the families they serve.

Sincerely,

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
National Association of Community Health Centers
ACCESS
ADAP Advocacy Association
Advocates for Children and Youth, Maryland
American Association of Birth Centers
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Kidney Fund
American Muslim Health Professionals
APAPA (Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs)
Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian American Health Coalitions dba HOPE Clinic
Asian American Psychological Association
Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Asian Health Services
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)
Asian Pacific Community in Action
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Borrego Community Health Foundation
Brigid Lawlor
California Center For Rural Policy
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Primary Care Association

Cancer Council of the Pacific Islands
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center For Pan Asian Community Services
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Charles B. Wang Community Health Center
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Advocacy Alliance
Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)
Chuuk Community Health Center
Coalition for Disability Health Equity
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Colorado Latino Leadership Advocacy and Research Organization
Commission on the public's health system
CommonSpirit Health
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County
Community Health Association Inland Southern Region
Community Health Care Association of New York State
Community Welfare Services of Metro Detroit
Desert AIDS Project
Eagle View Community Health System
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Equality California
Farmworker Justice
Finger Lakes Community Health
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center
Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center
Henderson County Rural Health Center, Inc.
Hep B United
Hep B United Philadelphia
Hep Free Hawaii
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hepatitis B Initiative of Washington, DC
Hepatitis Education Project
HIV Medicine Association
HopeHealth
Howard Brown Health
International Community Health Services
Justice in Aging
Kokua Kalihi Valley
La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc.
Lanai Community Health Center
Latino Commission on AIDS
Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc. (MCCOY)
MomsRising
NAACP

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition of Latinxs with Disabilities (CNLD)
National Community Action Partnership
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Education Association
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Immigration Law Center
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Task Force on Hepatitis B Focus on Asian and Pacific Islander Americans
NC Child
Neighborhood Health Center
Network for Environmental & Rconomic Responsibility of United Church of Christ
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Immigrant Law Center
New York Immigration Coalition
Niskanen Center
NOELA Community Health Center
North East Medical Services
Northwest Regional Primary Care Association
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
OHSU Family Medicine at Richmond
Operation Access
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Our Children Oregon
our developing world
Outside In
People's Action
Physicians for Social Responsibility, AZ Chapter
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
RCHN Community Health Foundation
RESULTS
Robert G Gish Consultants LLC
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
SF Hep B Free - Bay Area
Silver State Equality-Nevada
Society for Public Health Education
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
The AIDS Institute
The Children's Partnership
The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation
Treatment Action Group

Tri-City Health Center
Union for Reform Judaism
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Utahns Against Hunger
Waimanalo Health Center
Watts Healthcare Corporation