

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader McConnell,

Thank you for your continued support for Community Health Centers (CHCs) as you have put the COVID-19 response packages together. We write today to urge you to include robust funding for CHCs in the next COVID-19 package.

Even with the funding provided to CHCs in the last COVID-19 response and relief packages, CHCs are already starting to feel the effects of tightening funds. In response to an even more limited supply of cash, CHCs are reducing their workforce during a time when it is most needed. In Massachusetts, 52 CHCs are beginning to furlough staff and there is a fear this will only continue throughout the pandemic.¹ This is in response to a significant drop in revenue due to postponement of procedures unrelated to COVID-19. As this crisis continues, this decline in revenue will only persist. CHCs across the country continue to be at the forefront of this pandemic. To keep these centers solvent, there is an urgent need for an immediate infusion of emergency funding as well as continued support for their operational needs.

CHCs are the first line of defense and a critical piece of our health care system. In order for them to effectively and appropriately respond to the COVID-19 crisis, as of April 3, 2020, they expressed a need for a minimum of \$7.6 billion. It is essential that this funding can be used to cover losses attributable to COVID-19. This would enable them to reemploy all staff in an effort to expand services and outreach and to respond to COVID-19 for the next six months. As this pandemic has persisted, the funding gaps for CHCs have shifted. Therefore, we urge you to work with CHCs on their current cost projection and include the complete funding needs they have identified.

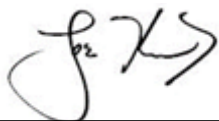
Not only do CHCs need an infusion of cash, but they are also faced with an uncertain future. While the CARES Act did extend funding for CHCs through November 30, 2020 and did enable them to access additional funding through grant programs, these short term solutions do not go far enough. In order to respond to COVID-19 while providing the highest quality care to all its patients, CHCs need to have an immediate guaranteed extension for at least five years, which includes a minimum of \$69.7 billion for CHCs to expand their presence and to provide more services to more patients. Now more than ever, it is essential that they have all the necessary

¹ <https://www.wbur.org/commonhealth/2020/04/06/community-hospitals-furlough-staff-revenue-losses>

funds and equipment to ensure they are able to provide care to all those who need it. Now is not the time for CHCs to worry about keeping their doors open. They are critical to our health care system, and in an effort to curb the epidemic and successfully treat everyone who has COVID-19, CHCs are a central part.

Without community health services, there is no way the United States will be able to effectively respond to this global crisis.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



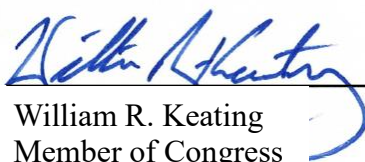
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



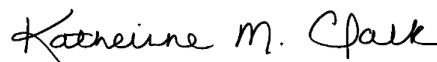
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress