



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

January 27, 2022

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization representing more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, service providers and organizations, I urge you to include critical health care funding and COVID assistance in legislation currently being developed to fund the government and address ongoing pandemic needs.

In addition to the appropriations priorities in our previous [letter](#), we strongly encourage Congress to include funding provisions to address the immediate needs and crises facing hospitals and long-term care facilities. Even in the face of the delta and omicron variants, our front-line providers continue to provide compassionate, high-quality care to persons of all ages, races, faiths, and ethnic backgrounds with special attention to the poor and vulnerable. Congress must act to ensure that our members have the resources to continue to address widespread challenges including the extreme staffing shortage and unsustainable double and triple cost increases affecting capacity and the ability to accept new patients; health care staff burnout; and rising costs attributed to supply chain shortages and COVID testing and supplies. We ask that Congress include the following policies to immediately aid our members:

- **Additional Provider Relief Funding:** We are grateful that Congress created and provided these funds to assist our members during the pandemic and economic crisis. While the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been sending these funds out in various tranches, we ask that you urge HHS to release any remaining funds and that Congress appropriate additional resources to the Provider Relief Fund in order for hospitals, long-term care facilities and other health care organizations to immediately address issues arising from the effects of the pandemic including the severe shortage of health care personnel.
- **Delay Medicare Sequestration:** We urge Congress to delay the Medicare sequestration cuts slated for this spring. The recent surges in hospitalization resulting from both the delta and omicron variants highlight the operational and financial challenges that our members face as they strive to provide care for their communities.

- **Increase Funding for Global Vaccination Efforts:** In order to curb the spread of COVID-19, it is essential for the United States to provide ongoing support to assist world vaccination efforts. The delta and omicron variants illustrate the urgent need to ensure countries around the world have access to affordable vaccines and the ability to equitably distribute them in their country.
- **Delay Medicare Accelerated and Advanced Repayments:** This funding stream from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) was vital to many of our members in their work at the height of the pandemic. Given the volatility caused by the delta and omicron variants on hospitals, health systems and long-term care facilities, we ask that Congress grant flexibility by suspending repayments temporarily to ensure that our members are able to manage the continuing financial challenges as well as continue to provide needed care in their communities.
- **Medicaid Support:** True to the mission of many of our members to serve the poor and vulnerable, we continually push for policies to aid the many Medicaid beneficiaries who access care at our facilities. We ask that Congress act on a technical fix to mitigate the unintended harms caused by reduced funding by Section 203 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 which modified how uncompensated care is calculated for the Medicaid Disproportionate Share (DSH) program.

Thank you for considering these legislative priorities, all of which are rooted in Catholic health care's strong commitment to reducing health disparities, promoting health equity and ensuring that everyone in our nation has access to affordable health coverage. Following the challenges of the last two years, Catholic health providers remain committed to facing these unprecedented local and national emergencies. We thank you for your leadership on behalf of all the communities we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,


Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO