



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

March 12, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I am writing to urge that Congress work toward bipartisan passage of a coronavirus response bill. Any legislation must contain immediate remedies that promote public health and protects the health and economic well-being of individuals, their families and communities.

From our early history and throughout our nation's public health crises, Catholic health care has answered the call to serve populations affected by disasters, influenza pandemics and the opioid epidemic. We are now working at the forefront of the coronavirus outbreak. Our members continue to work with their federal, state and local agencies to ensure that effective measures are in place to respond to this current public health emergency. We call on Congress to ensure that any legislative proposal includes the following targeted measures:

- Testing for coronavirus that is available to everyone, including those who are uninsured, without cost to the patients and with reimbursements to providers to ensure universal access;
- Paid sick leave for all workers who contract the virus or who need to care for a family member;
- Increased unemployment insurance benefits to protect and support individuals and families impacted by the outbreak and economic downturn;
- Increased nutrition eligibility and benefits for children, seniors and families who are adversely impacted by the virus;
- Protections and support for workers on the frontline responding to this crisis, including health care personnel in hospitals and long-term care settings, including support for childcare expenses;
- Increased Medicaid Federal Matching Assistance Percentage (FMAP) funding, which is necessary to provide immediate relief for states to address public health needs;
- Extension of expiring Medicaid and community health programs, including Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments, funding for Community Health Centers and the National Health Services Corps Fund;
- Requiring 12-month continuous eligibility and enrollment in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program with an enhanced FMAP to ensure that low-income and vulnerable children, individuals and families maintain their health care coverage through this crisis;
- Protect access to care and emergency testing for migrants living in the United States by suspending or repealing the recent public charge regulation;

- Provide emergency financial assistance to prevent home evictions and housing instability;
- Increased funding for the National Emergency Food and Shelter and Social Services Block Grant programs to help respond to community needs.

We draw strength from our long history of working collaboratively with government and other stakeholders during times of public health emergencies. CHA hopes that Congress and the Administration continue to work together to protect our communities and prevent the spread of coronavirus. We ask for swift passage of legislation that can deliver the needed resources to save lives.

Sincerely,



Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO