

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We respectfully request that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) work to expeditiously award funding appropriated under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for eligible health care providers and entities as they continue to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the CARES Act, which provides over \$2 trillion in economic support for individuals and our health care system, including \$100 billion within the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund specifically for hospitals and providers.

As members of the New Jersey and New York delegations, we write to urge you to prioritize health care providers in our states for allocated funding. Our health care providers on the frontlines of this crisis are facing unprecedented barriers to providing care and we cannot hesitate in providing them the funding needed to treat and care for all individuals impacted by COVID-19. This funding is critical for health care entities and will help them prepare for surge capacity by building temporary medical sites, increasing the health care workforce, and acquiring much needed resources, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies. Outside of these requirements, the Secretary has discretion over the funding. For this reason, we implore you to prioritize the two states with the highest number of positive COVID-19 cases.

In order to meet surge capacity, hospitals throughout New Jersey and New York have invested millions to prepare for the surge of patients in the rapidly unfolding COVID-19 crisis. One hospital has a cash shortfall of approximately \$7.5 million right now and is projecting a shortfall of \$75.03 million this calendar year alone. Another health system in New York is looking at spending an additional \$30 million a month as a result of the increase in COVID-19 patients. Moreover, hospitals in our states have ceased all elective procedures leading to millions in lost revenue, and in some cases hundreds of millions. On top of that, many of our hospitals have only enough personal protective equipment (PPE) to last only a few days, and some only have a week's worth of cash on hand.

State officials with both Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey and Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York have told our delegations that if federal funding does not come through quickly, the states will not be able to fulfill basic needs of our residents and will be unable to continue to stop the spread of COVID-19.

As of March 31, New Jersey has 18,690 positive cases of COVID-19. New York has 75,795 positive cases of COVID-19, 10,929 of which are hospitalized. Currently, the health care infrastructure in both New Jersey and New York is incredibly overwhelmed. New York is now the epicenter of the outbreak in the United States. With their many major metropolitan and densely-populated areas, these two states are poised to remain disproportionately impacted by this pandemic.

As health care professionals describe their hospitals as war zones and the death toll in our states continues to rise, federal funding must be prioritized for hospitals and health care providers in states bearing the brunt of treating infected patients. This will not only help states like New Jersey and New York in their COVID-19 response efforts, but will also help stem the outbreak of this disease throughout the nation. We hope you will heed our call with the same sense of urgency that our states have felt to lead the nation in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert Menendez
United State Senator



Cory A. Booker
United State Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United State Senator



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

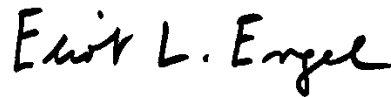


Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress

/s/ Jefferson Van Drew
Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress

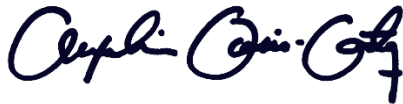


Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Max Rose
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter T. King
Peter T. King
Member of Congress



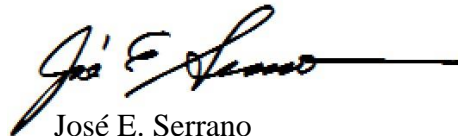
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress



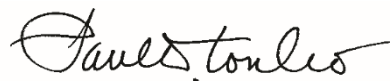
Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
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Joseph Morelle
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Paul D. Tonko
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Kathleen M. Rice
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Tom Reed
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Hakeem Jeffries
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