

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2020

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your leadership and work to provide relief to the American people during the COVID-19 epidemic through the passage of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. With negotiations for the next COVID-19 relief package underway, we write to convey our strong support that future legislation include a provision that forgives Medicare accelerated payments' interest rates and pursues full loan forgiveness for hospitals and other providers.

Our nations' hospitals have invested heavily to prepare for the pandemic. They canceled tens-of-thousands of elective surgeries and non-emergent patient tests at the government's request to help assure there is adequate hospital capacity, preserve gear and equipment, and reduce the risk of unnecessary patient spread. This major shift has put some of America's hospitals on the brink of financial disaster.

Without further support, hospitals will face another financial crisis just four months from now as the government begins to withhold Medicare payments for services provided after the pandemic fades and until the loans are repaid. While the \$175 billion provider grant program, designed to provide support to all providers, is helpful, much more support is needed. In the absence of substantially more financial support, it is nearly certain that many hospitals will be forced to close or significantly reduce health care services over the next several months – and perhaps longer. This would be a tragic consequence, especially if the country is hit with another round of the viral epidemic in the near future.

In addition to grant funding and new loan programs with zero or low interest rates, Congress should provide loan forgiveness to ensure the additional financial support hospitals and other providers direly need. Forgiveness would be for health care related expenses or lost revenues that are directly attributable to coronavirus. And, just like the requirement in the provider grant program, providers electing to have their advance payment loans forgiven would be obligated to abstain from balance

billing any patient for COVID-related treatment. In addition, Congress would mandate criteria for transparency and accountability of the loan forgiveness.

Emergency funding requests to combat the unprecedented times we face do not come lightly. We recognize the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund faces imminent concern necessitating a long-term financial solution, and Congress is committed to its solvency. Furthermore, we are also committed to providing timely aid and necessary relief for our hospital caregivers and providers. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We stand ready to work with you in every way to support the men and women on the frontline caring for those with the coronavirus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcy Kaptur".

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Gibbs".

Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress