

January , 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500-0005

Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate

Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Mr. President and Congressional Leaders:

We are very grateful for your ongoing leadership and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. From providing billions of dollars in financial support, regulatory relief and community resources – including boots on the ground – to support our caregivers, your response has been extremely significant. However, the reality is still stark and additional help is needed as we face yet another nation-wide surge of the virus.

Critical staffing shortages are crippling our response efforts. We have all diverted some non-clinical staff to support our clinicians across all patient care settings, while we simultaneously continue to support community vaccination efforts and ongoing needs. The need for clinical and non-clinical staff in our hospitals, driven by unprecedented patient volume and severity, is dramatically increasing the cost of providing care in our health systems. These developments have brought our national health system to the brink.

If one-third of the population across the United States remains unvaccinated, then the government must take extraordinary action to assure the short- and long-term viability of the nation's health care system.

To help us, we are recommending the following policy changes that will take both Congressional and Administrative actions (several recommendations have already been introduced in Congress):

- Delay implementation of Medicare sequestration through July 1, 2022
- Delay Medicare loan repayments for a year. (H.R.2407)
- Update DRG payment for COVID to reflect the longer length of stay
- Provider Relief Fund:
 - Distribute remaining funds to providers no later than March 31, 2022. Focus payments on staffing costs (budgeted vs actual from April 1, 2021 to March 1, 2022)
 - Increase fund by \$20 billion

- Delay reporting requirements by six (6) months
- Allow FEMA to reimburse for direct *and* indirect clinical staffing costs related to COVID
- Reinstate hospitals that have lost their 340B status due to the pandemic. (S. 773)
- Protect current nurse and allied health workforce funding (H.R. 4407 / S.1568)
- Delay for six (6) months Cares Act Reporting 2 deadline of March 31, 2022 and Medicare Cost Reporting deadlines of May 30, 2022.
- Delay implementation or enforcement of Surprise Billing regulations (particularly ‘good faith estimate’ requirements) until January 2023.
- Delay enforcement of hospital price disclosure requirements until January 2023.

(We have attached a two-page Fact Sheet that provides additional details on these requests.)

We ask Congress and the Administration to act on these and other relief initiatives by mid-February. This will help ensure a viable national health care system as the pandemic continues.

Sincerely,

(Names of supporting hospitals and health systems listed below)