

January 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President of the United States
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

The National Alliance of Safety-Net Hospitals thanks you for your leadership in making the response to COVID-19 your first priority in office and for the care and thought that went into your “National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness.”

Private safety-net hospitals are on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19 in diverse, low-income communities across the country, and the immediate steps you have taken should make a major difference in our ability to serve these communities: assuring an adequate supply of the materials and equipment we need to fight the pandemic; improved access to effective treatment; the directive to establish mass vaccinations sites and the commitment to vaccinating as many Americans as possible in as little time as possible; the assurance that insurers of all types will understand their obligation to pay for COVID-19 testing and treatment; National Guard assistance; and more.

More broadly, we appreciate your recognition that COVID-19 is a national challenge that cries out for a national strategy that encompasses leadership, plans, laws, and the resources needed to get the job done. We also appreciate your recognition of the role safety-net providers have played in the response this pandemic.

More than anything else, your executive order pursuing an equitable pandemic response and recovery is a clear reflection that your goals are our goals: to serve diverse, low-income, under-served communities more effectively. We are encouraged to find the federal government ready to be our partner in advancing health equity as the key to improving the health of the communities we serve. We also are confident that the steps you have taken now, and that you will continue to take in the future, are indicative of more than your short-term response to this terrible pandemic: we trust you will be pursuing the same mission, with the same vigor, when we finally put the worst of COVID-19 in America’s rear-view mirror.

The nation’s private safety-net hospitals appreciate your support for the work we are doing and look forward to working with your entire health care team to overcome the dire threat posed by COVID-19 and to take clear, bold, successful steps toward achieving true health care equity in those communities.

Sincerely,



Ellen Kugler, Esq.
Executive Director



About the National Alliance of Safety-Net Hospitals

The National Alliance of Safety-Net Hospitals advocates for adequate recognition and financing of private safety-net hospitals that serve America's neediest communities. These private safety-net hospitals differ from other hospitals in a number of key ways: they serve communities whose residents are older and poorer; they serve patients who are more dependent on Medicare and Medicaid for health care; they provide more uncompensated care; and unlike public safety-net hospitals, they have no statutory entitlement to local or state funds to underwrite their costs. NASH's role is to ensure that when federal officials make policy decisions, they understand the implications of those decisions for these distinctive private safety-net hospitals. NASH pursues its mission through a combination of vigorous, informed advocacy, data-driven positions, and an energetic membership with a clear stake in the outcome of public policy debates.