

May 17, 2021

Urge HHS to Direct Much-Needed Provider Relief Funds to Safety-Net Hospitals

Dear Senator Collins:

The National Alliance of Safety-Net Hospitals appreciates everything Congress is doing to help private safety-net hospitals serve their diverse, predominantly low-income communities during the COVID-19 emergency.

While we especially value the support provided by the CARES Act's Provider Relief Fund, many private safety-net hospitals have not received equitable support from that fund. The distribution of the Provider Relief Fund has favored hospitals with more resources and higher proportions of privately insured patients and has been disadvantageous to safety-net hospitals that serve larger numbers of Medicaid-covered and uninsured patients. While the criteria employed to select hospitals to receive special safety-net distributions was helpful for some, they excluded many important safety-net hospitals, including some that provide the highest volumes of care to Medicaid patients in the entire country. As a result, while the Provider Relief Fund has been an important tool for helping providers respond to COVID-19, it has not delivered the level of support safety-net hospitals need and deserve. In addition, some safety-net hospitals have not received any targeted assistance or distributions of any kind from the Provider Relief Fund in nearly a year.

Last week NASH wrote to Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Becerra to convey this concern and to outline specific steps the administration can take to rectify this problem with the remaining Provider Relief Fund resources still at the agency's disposal.

Despite the progress we see in the fight against COVID-19, the crisis continues in the vulnerable communities safety-net hospitals serve: they continue to care for COVID-19 patients, they continue to care for communities that have been hit especially hard by this virus and patients who have avoided seeking care for the past year, and they continue to care for disproportionate numbers of low-income patients who are uninsured or insured by Medicaid. For these reasons, it is essential that steps be taken to direct a significant proportion of remaining Provider Relief Fund resources to safety-net hospitals.

We ask you to appropriate additional funding for provider relief and direct its distribution in a way that ensures that safety-net hospitals that have been underfunded by the Provider Relief Fund receive the resources they so desperately need.



You can view the letter NASH sent to Secretary Becerra [here](#). We hope you will echo our sentiments and urge HHS to use the remaining Provider Relief Funds to compensate for past shortcomings in the distribution of these funds by directing more of those resources to the private safety-net hospitals that need and deserve them.

Sincerely,

Ellen Kugler, Esq.
Executive Director

