



The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Leader, US Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, US House  
Washington, D. C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Democratic Leader, US Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader, US House  
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 20, 2020

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

On behalf of our [16 member organizations, serving 850,000+ patients in three southern California counties \(San Diego, Imperial and Riverside\)](#), and the [29 million patients](#) America's Community Health Centers serve, we **thank you** for the leadership and the support you have shown as we tirelessly work to respond to and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 within our communities.

We are grateful for the initial supplemental funding package included \$100 million for Community Health Centers to prevent, prepare for and respond to the coronavirus – this funding is critical to our providers and staff, those best positioned to treat vulnerable populations at-risk for contracting the virus.

**Today we urgently request that you provide additional critically needed resources to support the nation's Community Health Center infrastructure during the COVID-19 crisis.** Our nation's Community Health Centers, which provide critical primary care to 29 million lower-income Americans, are expected to **see total losses exceeding \$3 billion over the next 12 weeks alone.**

Community Health Centers are experiencing declining Medicaid revenue at the exact same time they are making significant unbudgeted outlays for emergency equipment and supplies. Community Health Centers' normal Medicaid visit numbers are declining as patients stay home and the centers curtail non-urgent services. **Our member health centers in San Diego, Riverside and Imperial counties – and, across California – are reporting a 50 percent decrease in visits.** Early data from our members in San Diego, Riverside and Imperial counties indicates **a decline of between 50 and 70 percent of their net patient service revenue.** This represents a loss of **\$40M per month, or \$120M for the next 90 days.** These losses are not sustainable and would cause a ripple effect through the health care continuum, if health centers were to close their doors.



Our national association, the [National Association of Community Health Centers \(NACHC\)](#), requested immediate **financial relief of \$3.3 billion through the next federal Stimulus Bill**. Therefore, we were upset to learn the proposed Senate CARES Act only has \$1.32 billion (or 1% of the total bill) allocated for Community Health Centers. This was a surprise, especially since Leader McConnell indicated that the stimulus measures will need to **“beat back this virus” by funding public health programs like health centers**. “That’s why our proposal will go even further to remove barriers to care, speed innovation, fund the hospitals and health centers that will treat patients, and expand health-care workers’ access to the tools they need, including respirator masks,” Leader McConnell said from the Senate floor.

**Community Health Centers are struggling with several challenges during this crisis.**

- They do not have enough testing supplies, and they are experiencing delays from vendors and labs.
- They cannot obtain enough personal protective equipment (PPE). While some regions have systems and structures in place to distribute supplies—backlogs, severe shortages and logistical challenges persist. They are scouring online vendors and other non-traditional sources to try to procure the supplies they need.
- Their call centers are overwhelmed with inquiries from both patients and non-patients seeking answers to questions, reassurance, and asking for testing. The increased call volume comes as health centers are trying to protect their own staff by implementing social distancing measures, relocating staff, implementing remote work policies, and contending with staff facing childcare challenges due to school closures.
- They are setting up exterior screening areas and in some cases isolation areas, to protect staff and other patients from those who may be infected with the coronavirus.

**We respectfully ask Congress to provide \$3 to \$5 billion in additional supplemental emergency funding during this critical period when we can best prepare and respond to this pandemic.**

I thank you again for your ongoing support of Community Health Centers which are proud to partner with you to strengthen the health care safety-net, particularly in times of crises. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold, we understand you will have many priorities in need of your attention, and we stand ready to support you in those efforts.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry H. Tuttle".

Henry Houghteling Tuttle  
President and CEO  
[htuttle@hcpsocal.org](mailto:htuttle@hcpsocal.org)

[Health Center Partners of Southern California](#), a family of companies, includes a [16-membership organization](#) of federally qualified health centers, Indian Health Services Organizations, both urban and sovereign, and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, collectively serving 850,000+ patients each year, for 3.6 million patient visits each year, at 140 practice sites across San Diego, Riverside, Imperial counties, with the seventh largest provider group in the region. [2018/2019 Impact Report](#)