



April 1, 2020

Secretary Alex Azar
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

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, I am writing to urgently request you to make funds available to Community Health Centers through the **Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF)** created as part of the recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

While the CARES Act contains \$1.32 billion in funding for Community Health Centers, that amount was far short of what the sector requested and will not be nearly enough to sustain Community Health Centers given the expected trajectory of the pandemic.

[A recent analysis completed by Capital Link](#) estimates that [our members](#) stand to lose more than **\$92 million** in revenue over the next three months (April – June). Community Health Centers in California will lose **\$645 million** and, nationally **\$3.2 billion**. This same report estimates (during this period) **57%** of our members will exhaust 100% of their reserves, **25%** across California, and **28%** nationally. Additionally, our members will lose **2,500+ jobs**, in California **18,000+**, and nationally **85,000+**. Now more than ever, we need all the health care providers available. This is not the time to layoff or furlough these critical health care workers.

While there are other programs in the CARES Act that can provide relief for small businesses, like the Paycheck Protection Program a large percentage of Community Health Centers are too large to qualify for such relief. **Six of our 16 members have 500+ employees.** We need to ensure these Community Health Centers also have the necessary funds to remain open.

The CARES Act appropriated \$100 billion to the fund for "necessary expenses to reimburse, through grants or other mechanisms, eligible health care providers for health care related expenses or lost revenues that are attributable to coronavirus". The language further gives the Secretary clear authority to designate eligible health care providers "as the Secretary may specify".

I urge you to use your authority to ensure Health Centers are considered eligible providers, and that a portion of the funds totaling at least \$7.6 billion (over the next six months) be apportioned.



Demand will never be higher. The needs of our patient populations are not going to go away. And neither can we.

For these reasons, I urge you to make funds available to Community Health Centers as their applications for assistance are submitted in the coming weeks, **with priority given to Community Health Centers health with 500+ or more staff.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry N. Tuttle".

Henry N. Tuttle
President and CEO
htuttle@hcpsocal.org

CC: U.S. Representatives
Raul Ruiz M.D., Scott Peters, Susan Davis, Juan Vargas, Ken Calvert, Mike Levin, Mark Takano

[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](#).