

July 19, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

The undersigned organizations that represent diverse areas of the healthcare and public health systems that care for the underserved request that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) allocate a significant portion of funding at the Secretary's discretion included in any pending or future COVID-19 supplemental appropriations package to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) COVID-19 Uninsured Program (the Uninsured Program). This program has been crucial to the nation's COVID response to protect those populations at greatest risk and represents an important pillar for the nation's ongoing pandemic response.

First included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act,¹ funding for the Uninsured Program within HHS' Provider Relief Fund has served as the only program with the flexibility to support providers as they vaccinate, test, and treat uninsured individuals across the nation. For many Americans, access to traditional medical care is limited by numerous factors, including travel distance, extensive hours dedicated to work and family care, financial limitations, and others. Because of the unique needs of this population, a funding program that allows entities to establish creative programs for treatment, such as mobile medical facilities and testing labs, while also decompressing more traditional healthcare sites that have been hard hit by COVID, such as hospitals, community health centers, and others, has been irreplaceable as part of the nation's coordinated response to COVID-19.

As we have seen as a nation, COVID-19 and its variants will likely be a significant part of daily life for the coming months and years, with the loss of the one millionth American in May as a stark reminder of the terrible impact COVID-19 has had on the country. For the millions of underserved and undertreated Americans, additional resources are needed to ensure both treatment against increasingly transmissible strains of COVID-19 and access to resources for those who require weekly or daily testing for their employment and other daily activities. As such, it is important that HHS take the appropriate action within their authority to provide substantial funding for the Uninsured Program as directed by Congress so that those who cannot readily access the traditional healthcare system can receive this vital care. As Americans look to new ways to live with COVID-19 through testing, treatment, and vaccination, the Uninsured Program remains a vital part of the nation's pandemic response.

¹ Public Law 116-127.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

American Osteopathic Association
Big Cities Health Coalition
California Medical Association
Iowa Medical Society
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Rural Health Association
Nebraska Hospital Association
Nomi Health
Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland
Polk County Medical Society
Utah Association of Naturopathic Physicians

CC: Carole Johnson, Administrator, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
Rochelle Walensky, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)