

July 26, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) writes to strongly oppose any attempt to take away previously-appropriated funding for hospitals and health systems, physicians, nurses and other health care providers providing heroic care during a global pandemic. It would be short-sighted of Congress, the White House and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to take funding away from hospitals, health systems and other health providers while COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths are surging again throughout the nation.

The COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) is very much ongoing. COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are once again increasing in many areas of the country. For example, for the week ending July 20, hospitalizations in 42 states increased week-over-week, with 15 states increasing by 40% or more (see attached table). Similarly, COVID-19 cases have increased dramatically across the country, with 28 states experiencing a 50% or more increase week-over-week. Many areas of the country are experiencing high intensive care unit (ICU) bed occupancy rates, with 12 states over 75%. Further, experts continue to warn that the more contagious delta variant combined with lower vaccination rates in certain areas of the country could spur a fall and winter surge in COVID-19 cases.

In addition, despite the ongoing pandemic and evidence provided about the continued need for additional funding, the Administration has yet to distribute remaining PRF amounts. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) made PRF distributions to health care providers throughout 2020. For example, in April 2020, it made Phase 1 and 2 General Distributions. In May 2020, it made payments to providers serving COVID-19 hot-spot areas, as well as those serving rural areas. In June 2020, it provided funds to hospitals serving high numbers of Medicaid and uninsured patients. In



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July 2020, HRSA made additional distributions to hot spot and rural providers, and in August 2020, to those that had not received proportionate General Distribution funds, as well as to children's hospitals. Finally, in December 2020, funds provided through the Phase 3 application process began going out.

The simple fact is that distributions have not kept pace with the pandemic, despite the existence of funding provided by Congress. Except for distributions from Phases 1 and 2, most distributions have been based on metrics from the first half of 2020 – a timeframe from more than a year ago. Many hospitals and health systems had significant costs during COVID-19 surges last summer and winter, and they have needs now. However, they have not received funding targeted to those timeframes, despite the availability of that funding. That is unacceptable.

The Phase 3 distribution that began in December 2020 was the last funding distribution announced and made by HRSA. This is despite the fact that, as reported by the Government Accountability Office, about 25% of PRF funds (\$43.7 billion of \$178 billion) still have not been distributed. In addition, HRSA has not announced any plans to distribute the \$8.5 billion in relief funds appropriated under the American Rescue Plan Act for rural providers.

We urge Congress to oppose any provisions that would rescind funding from the PRF to pay for spending unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we would oppose any infrastructure legislation that contains these provisions. Failing to do so denies the seriousness of the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic and the work that hospitals and health systems, physicians, nurses and other health care providers are doing to care for patients and communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/

Richard J. Pollack  
President and Chief Executive Officer

# State-level COVID-19 Data

(Data from the week of July 20, 2021)

State	Number of COVID-19 Cases <i>(over last 7 days)</i>	Percent Change in COVID-19 Cases <i>(from prior week)</i>	Number of COVID-19 Hospital Admissions <i>(over last 7 days)</i>	Percent Change in COVID-19 Hospital Admissions <i>(from prior week)</i>	ICU Bed Occupancy Percentage
AL	6679	79%	709	106%	83%
AK	1141	122%	51	16%	68%
AZ	7628	37%	654	33%	51%
AR	8208	15%	721	5%	70%
CA	22406	2%	2260	41%	70%
CO	3061	29%	336	-5%	67%
CT	1144	78%	80	45%	53%
DC	320	20%	27	35%	79%
DE	284	88%	24	60%	78%
FL	62382	59%	5548	52%	80%
GA	9536	60%	1049	33%	77%
HI	892	94%	37	-16%	64%
ID	1292	38%	93	19%	73%
IL	6057	45%	512	20%	62%
IN	3775	26%	356	17%	65%
IA	1405	49%	124	33%	64%
KS	3464	29%	314	43%	72%
KY	3557	30%	611	-36%	60%
LA	14042	100%	905	64%	66%
ME	407	125%	103	186%	74%

# State-level COVID-19 Data

(Data for the week of July 20, 2021)

State	Number of COVID-19 Cases <i>(over last 7 days)</i>	Percent Change in COVID-19 Cases <i>(from prior week)</i>	Number of COVID-19 Hospital Admissions <i>(over last 7 days)</i>	Percent Change in COVID-19 Hospital Admissions <i>(from prior week)</i>	ICU Bed Occupancy Percentage
MD	1373	65%	144	23%	69%
MA	2338	102%	96	-11%	72%
MI	2295	149%	259	17%	73%
MN	1609	55%	113	-1%	71%
MS	5593	113%	390	32%	75%
MO	15475	24%	1170	13%	85%
MT	494	22%	90	-15%	64%
NE	895	39%	100	47%	63%
NV	5806	23%	662	7%	78%
NH	232	23%	26	13%	62%
NJ	3586	58%	294	21%	42%
NM	1126	32%	108	7%	74%
NY	7896	55%	492	34%	62%
NC	7298	97%	538	50%	76%
ND	169	13%	17	31%	59%
OH	3814	71%	416	-1%	64%
OK	6125	64%	563	29%	77%
OR	2415	56%	138	37%	68%
PA	2930	82%	278	32%	76%
RI	394	86%	10	-9%	80%

# State-level COVID-19 Data

(Data for the week of July 20, 2021)

State	Number of COVID-19 Cases <i>(over last 7 days)</i>	Percent Change in COVID-19 Cases <i>(from prior week)</i>	Number of COVID-19 Hospital Admissions <i>(over last 7 days)</i>	Percent Change in COVID-19 Hospital Admissions <i>(from prior week)</i>	ICU Bed Occupancy Percentage
SC	3966	43%	285	42%	69%
SD	174	31%	41	32%	50%
TN	5488	77%	443	76%	69%
TX	25026	51%	3440	42%	88%
UT	4346	21%	308	21%	66%
VT	123	68%	1	-75%	74%
VA	3496	62%	257	37%	66%
WA	5020	13%	311	15%	74%
WV	635	52%	72	14%	73%
WI	1779	54%	195	50%	54%
WY	657	11%	97	67%	45%

**Source:** COVID-19 Community Profile Report provided by the White House COVID-19 Team, Joint Coordination Cell, Data Strategy and Execution Workgroup (<https://beta.healthdata.gov/Health/COVID-19-Community-Profile-Report/gqxm-d9w9>); COVID-19 cases data current as of July 21, 2021; COVID-19 hospital admissions and ICU bed occupancy data current as of July 20, 2021