

September 2, 2021

AHA Continues to Advocate for Federal Government to Distribute Remaining COVID-19 Provider Relief Funds

See article in today's Washington Post for latest in AHA efforts; watch for a webinar for AHA members next week with HRSA officials on PRF reporting

The AHA continues its multi-pronged effort urging the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to expeditiously distribute the billions of dollars remaining in the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) to hospitals and health systems, as well as the American Rescue Plan Act funding to reimburse rural providers for COVID-19-related expenses and lost revenues.

Following up on an Aug. 17 [AHA letter](#) to HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, the Washington Post today ran an [article](#) with the headline, "Tens of billions of dollars in pandemic aid for hospitals and nursing homes not distributed." The article states, "As many hospitals bulge again with COVID-19 patients, a wide swath of the health-care industry is exasperated that federal health officials have not made available any more of the aid since President Biden took office. About \$44 billion from a Provider Relief Fund created last year remains unspent, along with \$8.5 billion Congress allotted in March for medical care in rural areas." In addition, the article references AHA's advocacy efforts, including many letters to HHS on this issue, and highlights quotes and examples from hospital and health system leaders on why it's necessary for HHS to distribute the remaining funds quickly.

LAWMAKERS CALL FOR RELEASE OF REMAINING PRF FUNDS

In addition to AHA's efforts to get the funds released, lawmakers are asking the Administration to get these dollars to hospitals and health systems in their districts and states where it is urgently needed. Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., last week led 41 of their bipartisan colleagues in urging the HHS Secretary to distribute the funds remaining in the PRF and other health care relief programs. See the [full letter](#). In addition, a group of Republican senators, including Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., today urged HHS to release the remaining PRF money. See the [full letter](#).

LEGISLATION TO GIVE HOSPITALS MORE TIME TO USE PRF MONEY

Meanwhile, lawmakers continue to seek relief for hospitals and health systems on PRF deadlines. The [Provider Relief Fund Deadline Extension Act](#) (S. 2493/H.R. 4735) was introduced in July. It would allow providers that received COVID-19 PRF payments prior

to June 30, 2020, to use their payments through Dec. 31, 2021, or the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, whichever is later. Despite AHA's repeated urging, HHS required providers that received PRF money from April 10, 2020, through June 30, 2020, to spend those funds by June 30, 2021.

WEBINAR WITH HRSA OFFICIALS ON PRF REPORTING

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in July opened the [PRF reporting portal](#) for providers to begin reporting to the government that they used federal emergency relief funds for health care-related expenses or lost revenues attributable to COVID-19. Providers that received PRF payments from April 10, 2020, through June 30, 2020, have until Sept. 30, 2021, to submit the required information to HRSA. Hospitals and other health care providers that received PRF money after June 30, 2020, will need to report on the use of the funds at later dates as outlined in HRSA's [June 11 update on PRF requirements](#).

To help answer questions from hospital and health system leaders on PRF reporting, the AHA has tentatively secured the week of Sept. 7 for a webinar with HRSA officials exclusively for AHA member organizations. Details on the webinar are being finalized and will be shared with AHA members soon.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

If you have questions, please contact AHA at 800-424-4301.