

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 25, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate Room
S-221, The U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate Room
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell,

We are writing to urge you to move a standalone supplemental funding package that provides coverage for the uninsured through the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) through the end of the Fiscal Year. We are extremely concerned about the immediate funding cliff for COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and treatments for the uninsured. While President Biden signed the \$1.5T omnibus on March 15, 2022, the bill did not include additional funding for HRSA's Uninsured Program or the Increased Community Access to Testing (ICATT) program, which together have provided access to COVID testing, vaccines, and treatments for underserved populations across the country. The outcome of this funding shortfall will mean that millions of uninsured Americans will be unable to access COVID-19 tests, vaccines, and treatments. This is damaging to the public health of our country and will disproportionately harm the most vulnerable in the communities we represent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated long-standing racial and ethnic health inequities, with disproportionately high rates of hospitalization and death among African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Native American individuals. Current statistics show that Hispanic and Black individuals comprise a disproportionate share of the uninsured and one analysis showed that an estimated 5.7 million

uninsured Americans are at high risk for severe COVID-19.^{1,2} As of 2019, 6.6% of Asian Americans and 9.1% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders were uninsured.^{3,4}

For more than two years the HRSA uninsured and ICATT programs have been critical tools in combating the virus and protecting some of our nation's most vulnerable populations, including uninsured people and communities of color. These essential programs provide those without health insurance a means of accessing vital COVID-19 care such as vaccination, testing, and treatment services, including thousands of COVID-19 community testing sites located in our districts, 70% of which are in areas with moderate to severe social vulnerability.⁵

Unfortunately, we have learned that HRSA will cease accepting new claims for this population without additional appropriations from Congress. Specifically, providers in our districts have received notice that any testing and treatment claims submitted for this population after March 22 will not be accepted for payment. Further, any vaccine administration claims submitted after April 5 will not be accepted, removing a critical safety net for the uninsured. Likewise, projections for the ICATT program are also grim.

We fear that the loss of this funding will not only jeopardize our ability to combat the virus but also put millions of lives at risk, especially with case counts rising overseas and many public health experts warning of similar trends following in the U.S. in the coming weeks.

The need for these programs is clear and pressing. We urge you to fully fund programs that have provided access to testing, vaccines, and treatments for underserved populations by bringing a supplemental funding package to the floor as soon as possible. We thank you for your consideration of this request and your consideration for the communities we serve.

Sincerely,



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress

¹ <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-and-racial-health-equity/>

² <https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/issue-brief/how-many-adults-are-at-risk-of-serious-illness-if-infected-with-coronavirus/>

³ <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=63#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20overall%20private,percent%20non%2DHispanic%20white%20Americans>

⁴ <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=65>

⁵ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/01/07/hhs-continues-community-based-testing-sites-covid-19.html>



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



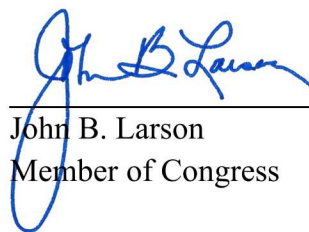
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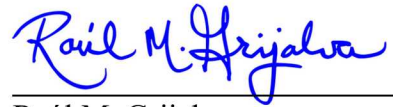
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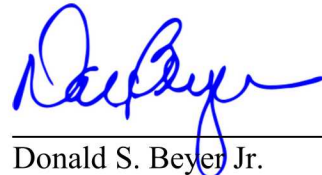
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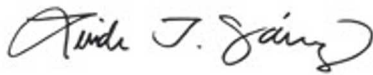
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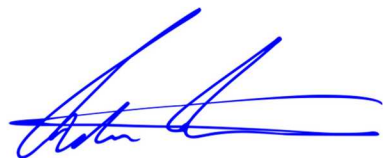
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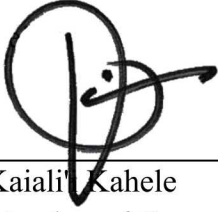
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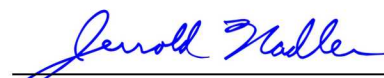
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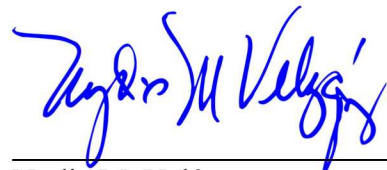
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