



### Accelerated Payment Forgiveness for Hospitals

Congress should provide for full forgiveness of Medicare accelerated payments for hospitals. Forgiving hospitals' accelerated payments is an essential step to help providers recover and rebuild while delivering the care that patients and communities are depending on as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.



### Provide Additional Funding for the Provider Relief Fund

Congress established the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) to cover expenses for health care providers preparing for and responding to COVID-19. The Provider Relief Fund is intended to offset expenses that are otherwise not covered, such as increased expenses for personal protective equipment, increased surge capacity, additional health care providers and lost revenue. While we appreciate Congress' efforts to allocate much-needed resources to hospitals and other health care providers, the \$175 billion injected into the Provider Relief Fund thus far does not cover the projected \$323 billion in losses hospitals are expected to sustain in 2020.



### Ensure Clear, Consistent, and Streamlined COVID-19 Reporting and Guidance for Hospitals

The reporting requirements and guidance for providers relating to COVID-19 and PRF funding have been confusing and unpredictable. Keeping up with the myriad reporting requirements from the Health and Human Services Department, which change significantly and frequently, often with little notice and no guidance for compliance, have presented tremendous challenges. We need consistency and predictability as we continue to navigate the pandemic on the frontlines and strive to care for our patients and communities.



### Make Telehealth Flexibilities Permanent

The telehealth waivers and flexibilities issued during the Public Health Emergency (PHE) have resulted in a major surge in telehealth utilization and industry-wide data-driven recognition that leveraging innovative technologies improves health outcomes and decreases cost. As such, CHRISTUS urges Congress to safeguard telehealth access for patients and providers beyond the PHE.



### Improve Emergency Response Systems

The federal government has instituted valuable resources to aid in the ongoing response to COVID-19, but these unprecedented times show deficiencies remain in our emergency preparedness systems. CHRISTUS urges policy-makers to work to attain a robust supply chain as well as to provide education, transparency, and equitable access surrounding COVID-19 testing, vaccines, and treatments.





## Increase Health Insurance Coverage

Congress should take action to maintain health benefits for individuals and families and increase coverage options for those who are already uninsured. This should include providing employer subsidies for preserving enrollment; covering COBRA costs; opening a Special Enrollment Period for health insurance marketplaces; increasing eligibility for federal marketplace subsidies; expanding the period during which insurers cannot cancel coverage for non-payment of premiums; and providing charity care tax credits for hospitals.



## Temporary FMAP Increase

CHRISTUS supports a temporary bump in funding to states by increasing their Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and Medicaid disproportionate share hospital (DSH) allotments.



## Support Rural Communities

CHRISTUS urges increased flexibilities for e-prescribing and telehealth; new Medicare designations to sustain rural communities; reinstatement of a payment floor to assist rural hospitals; increased funding for broadband access; and cost settlement for critical access hospitals after the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Delay Unsustainable Price Transparency Rule

Currently, the final price transparency rule takes effect on January 1, 2021. We ask policy-makers to delay its implementation given the administrative and financial burden it would pose to hospitals and health systems in the midst of responding to the pandemic.



## Provide Support for Safety-net Hospitals

Providers on the front lines must remain a priority for federal assistance. Increased Medicaid funding is critical to address the shortfalls in state and local budgets. Specifically, CHRISTUS requests the delay of imminent Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payment cuts.



## Federal Support for Health Care Heroes

We ask Congress to provide support for child care, housing, transportation and education benefits for hospital workers; provide bonus pay for hospital workers; and establish a compensation fund for COVID-19 health care workers and their families.



## Protect Hospitals' 340B Status

Savings from the 340B Drug Pricing Program remain vitally important to hospitals, especially during this public health emergency. Congress should ensure that safety-net hospitals do not lose access to 340B program discounts because of the effects of the public health emergency response on their operations, including changes in their payer or case mix or shortages of much-needed drugs.



## Federal Liability Protections

Congress should provide appropriate liability protections for facilities and front-line medical providers treating patients amid the COVID-19 crisis, for arranging and providing health care services, including where treatment is provided, and in determining how best to deploy personnel, equipment and facilities.

# SUPPORT. CHANGE.

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