



CHRISTUS Health's 2021 Congressional Priorities



Strengthen Public Health Emergency Preparedness



CHRISTUS Health is an integrated, not-for-profit international health system that includes more than 40 hospitals and facilities in four U.S. states. CHRISTUS serves as a safety-net provider for our communities and provides a significant amount of community benefit each year, including nearly \$440 million in fiscal year 2020. CHRISTUS strives to be a leader, partner, and advocate by creating innovative health and wellness solutions that improve the lives of individuals and communities we serve.

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.

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.

Increase Funding for Hospital Preparedness

Increased federal funding is critical to help meet the needs of safety-net providers during and beyond the pandemic. We request that Congress utilize an expedited, equitable distribution methodology to appropriate additional dollars to support and ensure continued access to care.

Halt Unsustainable Price Transparency Rule

The final price transparency rule took effect on January 1, 2021. We ask policy-makers to halt its implementation given the administrative and financial burden it poses to hospitals and health systems in the midst of responding to the pandemic.

Limit Barriers to Foreign Health Care Workers Practicing in the United States

As the U.S. continues to face health care workforce shortages, foreign-born doctors and nurses remain critical to support our efforts to deliver quality care. In fact, foreign-born professionals represent one in six health care workers in the United States. This is especially true in medically underserved areas. CHRISTUS supports breaking down barriers to allow foreign-born health care workers to help increase workforce capacity in the communities we serve.



Ensure A Strong Hospital Safety Net

Preserve the 340B Program

Savings from the 340B Drug Pricing Program are vital to our ability to provide low-income and rural patients with access to affordable medicines. CHRISTUS opposes any funding cuts and supports the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) advisory opinion to block drug companies' actions that will limit access to certain 340B drugs.

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. Policy-makers also should invest to provide additional resources to strengthen health care infrastructure and preparedness.

Increased Funding for Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) Payment Program

CHRISTUS supports increased funding for the CHGME Payment program in FY 2022. The CHGME Payment program helps The Children's Hospital of San Antonio (CHofSA) support the training of pediatric residents and addresses persistent shortages in a variety of areas in pediatric medicine that threaten access to care. CHofSA depends on CHGME to train its future pediatric workforce and to provide the best medical care for the children it serves.



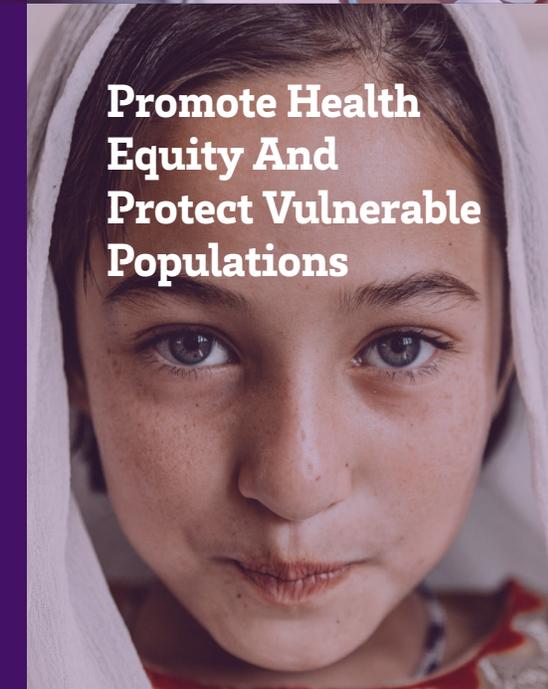
Reduce Health Care Costs For Patients

Lower Prescription Drug Prices

Rising prescription prices disrupt patient access to needed therapies and jeopardize the provision of quality care. CHRISTUS urges policy-makers to adopt solutions to reduce prescription drug prices by fostering competition, transparency, and value, while preserving continued innovation.

Protect Patients From Surprise Medical Bills

CHRISTUS applauds efforts to protect patients from "surprise bills" and remove them from payment negotiations between facilities, providers, and insurers. CHRISTUS urges the HHS to balance the needs of providers and insurers and adopt practical policies for claims processing and billing as it implements the No Surprises Act.



Promote Health Equity And Protect Vulnerable Populations

Expand Access to Care for Vulnerable Communities

CHRISTUS Health's mission underscores the goal of advancing innovative ways to bridge health equity gaps in underserved communities. We strongly support policies that help address social determinants of health, grant resources to eliminate health care disparities, and expand access to comprehensive care.

Continue the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program

CHRISTUS urges swift Congressional action to provide a framework to continue the DACA program and to resolve this matter humanely and with minimal disruption to our economy and national health system.

Preserve Health Care Coverage for Legal Immigrants

CHRISTUS supports the Executive Order that directs federal agencies to review actions taken to implement the misguided "public charge" rule and its impact on the public health of affected communities. CHRISTUS supports policies that encourage access to and provide health care coverage for legal immigrants.