

May 23, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy, and Schumer:

The undersigned national and community organizations urge Congress to act swiftly to ensure that the residents of the Pacific Island territories—American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI)—are able to receive the critical health care services they need. These territories' Medicaid programs are facing financial shortfalls and the health of all Medicaid beneficiaries on the islands, including children, pregnant women, seniors and people with disabilities, is at risk.

As you know, the Medicaid programs of the territories operate differently than in the 50 states. The territories' programs are limited by inequitable state match requirements and funding caps that threaten the financial stability of their Medicaid programs. As a result of their unique financing structure, the Pacific Island territories face significant challenges.

Most pressing is the Pacific Island territories are running out of money. Additional Medicaid funding provided by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that enabled the territories expires this year. However, the governments of American Samoa and Guam are unable to draw down all of their ACA Medicaid funds because of their high matching requirements, and the NMI has exhausted their funds.

Further, the demand for Medicaid services in all territories far exceeds their federally set Medicaid caps. These funding caps serve as a block grant that further limit annual Medicaid funding available to the territories. While the territories' ACA Medicaid funding increased the caps through 2019, without Congressional action, the territories will revert back to their pre-ACA cap levels, causing large funding shortfalls. For example, in FY2017, Guam's total federal spending with ACA funds was \$53.8 million, however without Congressional action, in FY2020, they will drop to pre-ACA levels of approximately \$17 million.

Medicaid funding for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) is also inadequate and deeply flawed, and we support efforts to alleviate these challenges as well. We commend Congress' action in providing relief to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands following recent natural disasters, and we urge Congress to further aid these territories as they continue to struggle with post-hurricane recovery.

In order to support Medicaid beneficiaries in the territories and the providers who support them, Congress must:

- Provide the NMI with additional funding for 2019, and allow American Samoa, Guam, and the NMI, which were also devastated by federally declared disasters, to draw down their remaining ACA funds without a state match, similar to Congressional relief provided to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands following their recent natural disasters;
- Immediately include in moving legislation critical Medicaid funds that American Samoa, Guam and the NMI need to continue providing health care to their residents this year;
- Provide longer-term adequate and sustainable funding for all U.S. territories to maintain their Medicaid programs and to serve their most vulnerable populations;

We commend you for your leadership in addressing the unique challenges in the territories. Our organizations stand ready to work with you to support immediate funding for the Pacific Island territories, and for the long-term investment in the Medicaid programs of all U.S. territories.

Sincerely,

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
ADAP Advocacy Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Counseling & Referral Service
Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of South Puget Sound
Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Washington State
Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Yakima
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
children's alliance
Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Community Catalyst
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Families USA
First Focus Campaign for Children
Guam Community Health Centers
Impetus - Let's Get Started LLC
Latino Commission on AIDS
Mariel Group, LLC
MDavis Consulting LLC
NAPAFASA
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Partnership for Women & Families
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pacific Island Health Officers Association
Pacific Islands Primary Care Association
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.
Treatment Action Group (TAG)

Cc: The Honorable Chuck Grassley
The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
The Honorable Joe Manchin
The Honorable Frank Pallone
The Honorable Greg Walden
The Honorable Raul Grijalva
The Honorable Rob Bishop

The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
The Honorable Michael F.Q. San Nicolas
The Honorable Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen
The Honorable Stacey Plaskett
The Honorable Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon