

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor
State of Illinois
100 West Randolph Street Suite 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601-3112

Dear Governor Pritzker:

As you know, Illinois is home to 51 community health centers (CHCs) serving more than 1.4 million patients and generating 18,500 jobs across their 390 access points in every corner of the state. In addition to being trusted sources of care and health information, CHCs are central to our local emergency preparedness and response systems. The coronavirus does not discriminate and neither do CHCs, which remain united in their mission to care for anyone regardless of insurance coverage or ability to pay. As such, it is important that we ensure their continued capacity to serve during the ongoing pandemic.

It is incumbent upon us as elected officials to make sure that everyone has access to the medical attention they need. Health centers are on the front lines of this public health crisis, delivering care in underserved communities across Illinois. As the coronavirus spreads, many CHCs find themselves facing financial hardship and experiencing a shortage of critical personal protective equipment.

Preventative and routine visits are being postponed in accordance with federal guidance. While this is an absolutely necessary step to prevent further community spread, eliminating visits also has the effect of drastically reducing the revenue health centers use to pay for staff, supplies, and other operating expenses. We have heard from the Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA) that several health centers already are facing grave decisions about how to avoid laying off staff, secure critical supplies, and, ultimately, maintain access for patients. This is especially problematic as IPHCA anticipates that CHCs will be asked to serve as rapid testing sites and the demand for care will spike as individuals flock to seek testing and treatment.

During this national emergency, we cannot afford for our healthcare facilities to lack the resources they need. It would be unthinkable for a Community Health Center to be forced to close due to a lack of adequate revenue.

That is why we request that you work expeditiously with the General Assembly to provide an influx of state funds to community health centers. These funds should be adequate for sustaining the provision of core health services in addition to responding to the coronavirus pandemic, and they must be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of our health centers serving Illinois' unique and diverse communities under conditions which are rapidly evolving.

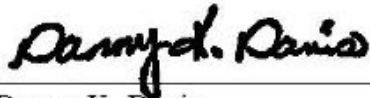
We remain committed to working with our colleagues in the U.S. Congress and with the Administration to prioritize Federal funding, but we must use all of the resources at our disposal. While we understand that Illinois will have to make tough choices in the days, weeks, and months ahead, adequate funding provided directly to our community health centers now will ensure we are ready to overcome these challenges. As such, we urge you to ensure our health centers receive an influx of state funding as quickly as possible.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue. If we may be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

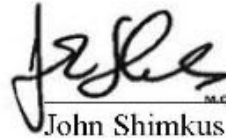
Sincerely,



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



John Shimkus
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress




Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress




Rodney Davis
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Robin L. Kelly
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Mike Bost
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Darin LaHood
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



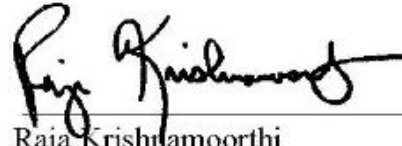
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



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