

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2020

Thomas J. Engels  
Administrator  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
Bureau of Primary Health Care  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Administrator Engels:

We write to you today as Members of the New York Congressional Delegation as New York State has become the epicenter of the crisis and response to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. As you know, Community Health Centers (CHCs) are at the frontlines of this crisis, and in New York they provide medical care and testing for over 2.4 million low-income people. New York's CHCs are grateful for the funds they have received to respond to COVID-19 thus far, however, we have heard a resounding message from our constituents: those funds, just \$5.2 million to date, are not enough. New York State accounts for nearly half of all confirmed COVID-19 cases nationwide, with 83,712 total positive tests as of Governor Cuomo's press conference on April 2, 2020. **Moving forward, it is critical that any funds disseminated to CHCs to respond to COVID-19 be distributed based off community need, prioritizing the states and regions of the country that are in the height of COVID-19 response.**

New York's CHCs are experiencing immense financial strain due to COVID-19. Based on a recent survey conducted by the Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS), 91% of CHCs reported a decline in visit volume between March 14 and March 28, and on average, visit volume has decreased by 56% during that period, meaning lower revenues across sites. Health centers continue to provide essential services via telehealth and telephonic visits that keep patients out of the already overcrowded emergency rooms and hospitals. However, reimbursement rates for these virtual visits are too low to sustain health centers' existing infrastructure. More than 70% of health centers have reduced scheduled hours for staff or even furloughed staff in the last month. Many CHCs have closed some sites and face the risk of full-scale closures.

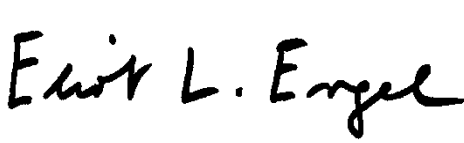
Despite these hardships, New York's CHCs continue to manage countless numbers of confirmed and unconfirmed COVID-19 patients at home using telehealth and telephonic visits, ensuring these patients do not visit an emergency room unless a trip is truly needed. They also continue to support their normal case load remotely, bringing patients in person only when truly medically

necessary. The work of NY CHCs is critical to ensuring that the NY hospital systems can continue to treat true emergencies. We fear the effect on the surrounding hospital systems if NY CHCs become unable to continue their day to day operations.

If HRSA does not designate funds to areas of greatest need, New York's health center network will be decimated during this unprecedented public health crisis. We must ensure that NY CHCs can adequately operate with peace of mind about their financial stability in the days and weeks to come and can continue to do what they do best- keep people healthy at home and out of the hospital.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress



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Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress



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Peter T. King  
Member of Congress



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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



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José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
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Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress



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Sean Patrick Maloney  
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John Katko  
Member of Congress



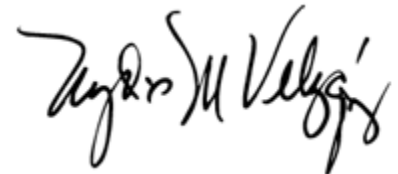
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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



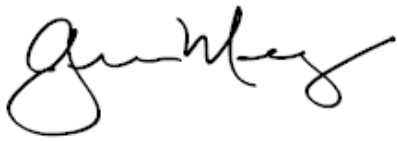
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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress



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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



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Elise M. Stefanik  
Member of Congress



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Anthony Brindisi  
Member of Congress



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Antonio Delgado  
Member of Congress



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Tom Reed  
Member of Congress

/s/

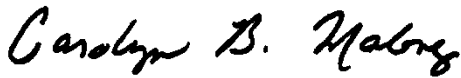
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Brian Higgins  
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