

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

On behalf of leading patient, provider, and public health organizations committed to ensuring access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines, thank you for your continued leadership in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for your unwavering commitment to protecting patients and their access to essential public health response tools. For more than two years, strong, bipartisan Congressional and Administrative alignment has ensured that all Americans have had access to the critical tools necessary to combat the pandemic, regardless of insurance status. However, those efforts risk stalling, prompting us to write today to express our urgent concern around the exhaustion of funding for essential components of our nation's pandemic response.

As bipartisan negotiations continue around funding for essential pandemic programs, **we urge Congress to act without delay and safeguard Americans' access to COVID-19 testing, treatments and vaccines**, and prevent the further dismantling of critical elements of our public health response. This must include prioritizing protecting Americans' ability to access the critical diagnostics tools they need to fight the pandemic – regardless of insurance status – and replenishing the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) COVID-19 Uninsured Relief Fund.

Without resources for the HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Relief Fund, which supported critical testing, treatment and vaccinations for uninsured individuals throughout the pandemic, the most vulnerable members of our communities may be at risk for losing much-needed resources to prevent, diagnose and treat new COVID-19 infections.

The COVID-19 Uninsured Relief Fund originally was established by the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* and has been replenished throughout the pandemic, most recently through the *2021 American Rescue Plan Act*. This critical program has provided life-saving access to COVID-19 testing for uninsured individuals and ensured that all Americans could access testing, treatments and vaccinations when needed; however, HRSA, which administers the program, has been unable to process claims for testing and treatment since March 22 and stopped accepting claims for vaccinations on April 5.

The COVID-19 Uninsured Relief Fund ensures access to needed services without cost-sharing – as Congress has long promised – and without it, many of our nation’s most vulnerable communities may lose access to testing, treatments and vaccinations, placing themselves and others at risk of infection. What’s more, without assurances to replenish funding, providers across the country are left without recourse to handle the influx of demand from uninsured Americans, forcing them to make decisions about the long-term sustainability of providing COVID-19 tests and services.

As we continue into the next phase of the pandemic, we must preserve the public health tools that have proven to be effective and protect Americans’ access to the services they’ve relied on throughout this public health crisis. Broad access to pandemic-response tools without cost-sharing has been a cornerstone of our national strategy, and we must not prematurely roll-back these essential services. We must remain vigilant about a new national wave of infections and fortify response efforts that Americans have come to rely on. Replenishing the COVID-19 Uninsured Relief Fund is essential to upholding critical public health efforts and to fulfilling Congress’ promise to provide access to testing, treatment and vaccinations without cost-sharing.

Our organizations strongly urge Congress to support the Administration’s request to fund all aspects of our national pandemic response immediately and not prematurely dismantle these critical elements.

Sincerely,

Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy
Addario Lung Cancer Medical Institute
AdvaMedDx
AIDS Action Baltimore
Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Pharmacy Compounding
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Ambulance Association
American Association of Bioanalysts
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Clinical Laboratory Association
American College of Apothecaries
American College of Apothecaries Research and Education Foundation
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American Lung Association
American Pharmacists Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Asian & Pacific Island American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Association for Molecular Pathology

Association of American Indian Physicians
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Big Cities Health Coalition
Black Women's Health Imperative
California Clinical Laboratory Association
Cancer Support Community
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
FamiliesUSA
FMI – The Food Industry Association
Go2foundation for Lung Cancer
Healthcare Leadership Council
HealthyWomen
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association
Justice in Aging
Medical Group Management Association
Men's Health Network
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations
National Association for the Support of Long-Term Care
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Counties
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Specialty Pharmacy
National Community Pharmacists Association
National Consumers League
National Grocers Association
National Health Council
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Independent Laboratory Association
National League for Nursing
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Pharmaceutical Association
National Rural Health Association
New York State Clinical Laboratory Association
North Carolina AIDS Action Network
Pharmacists Public Health Initiatives
Point of Care Testing Association
Retail Industry Leaders Association
RetireSafe
Society for Women's Health Research
The AIDS Institute
Trust for America's Health

CC:

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

The Honorable Kay Granger

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

The Honorable Richard Shelby