

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2404
March 22, 2020

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

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

Emergency relief is needed for health providers, especially rural health providers, in Mississippi and across the country. I certainly understand that other industries are absorbing significant financial losses; however, it is the hospitals and health care workers who stand on the front lines of providing care to patients and battling COVID-19 from a further spread. Meanwhile, hospitals are still caring for cancer patients, trauma patients, and patients with other significant needs. For Mississippi hospitals in my district and throughout the state, COVID-19 is not an "either or" it is a "but also" for an already strained industry.

Almost half of rural hospitals nationwide regularly operate at near loss. Some larger providers might be temporarily able to absorb significant losses from this pandemic, but rural providers are not. Congress needs to assist health care providers, and those in rural areas, who are on the brink of financial collapse to ensure they can meet payroll demands to the front-line health care personnel and to ensure that as many inpatient beds as possible are available during this COVID-19 pandemic by keeping rural hospitals open.

As you work with the Senate to finalize the CARES Act, I urge you to look at options for immediate cash assistance, no-interest loans, Medicare reimbursement adjustments, repealing DSH payment cuts and other suggestions to alleviate the pain.

I stand ready to work with you to resolve these issues. Thank you for your efforts to address this important matter.

Sincerely,



Steven M. Palazzo
Member of Congress