

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

As Members of the Texas Congressional Delegation, we write to request that the Department of Health and Human Services consider an additional allocation from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF) to high impact areas that have experienced a surge of COVID-19 cases in recent months. As we all fight to ensure the continued safety of our children, families, and communities during this pandemic, we appreciate your attention to this critical and timely request.

On July 17, 2020, HHS made payments in the second round of COVID-19 High-Impact Area Targeted Distribution for hospitals with a COVID-19 admission count over 161 between January 1 and June 10, 2020. Texas is thankful for the \$575 million that was distributed to our eligible providers. Unfortunately, the eligibility time window does not properly reflect when COVID-19 hospitalizations began surging in Texas. Over the past couple of months, the state has faced what was described as a 'tsunami' of COVID-19 patients, which overwhelmed hospitals and caused a massive shock to our communities. Between June and July, our state experienced a record-breaking number of people testing positive as well as number of people hospitalized.

Because of the June 10 cut-off date for the High-Impact Area Targeted Distribution, numerous Texas health providers did not receive an appropriate allocation of funds to help offset increased costs and lost revenue from the COVID-19 surge in the state. Therefore, we respectfully request an additional allocation for high impact areas from the remainder of the provider relief funds appropriated by Congress. Specifically, we urge you to consider a reevaluation for states like Texas that experienced a sharp rise in COVID-19 activity after June 10, 2020.

Essential health providers across Texas have delivered lifesaving care in the fight against COVID-19. An additional allocation from the PHSSEF that accounts for recent high impact areas will ensure the continued safety of our children, families, and communities as our country begins to recover from the pandemic.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to your consideration of and response to this important request.

Sincerely,



Roger Williams
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Jodey Arrington
Randy K. Weber
Pete Olson
Van Taylor
Brian Babin
Lance Gooden
Chip Roy
Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Bill Flores
Louie Gohmert
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