

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4606

April 9, 2020

Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

Right now, Iowa hospitals and health care providers are experiencing heartbreaking financial difficulties. They face growing expenses in the preparation for a surge in COVID-19 patients while simultaneously facing dropping revenue in providing fewer non-essential services. In recent days, I have spoken with representatives of hospitals and health care providers across my district who are eager to get more information about how to qualify for federal assistance and when the relief will come.

On March 27, I helped pass into law H.R. 748: the CARES Act, which includes \$100 billion in relief for hospitals and health care providers under the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. This is a critical source of funding to relieve lost revenue and increased expenses. Success in administering the funds, however, is going to be key to ensuring the \$100 billion makes a true difference for our hospitals and health care providers.

On April 7, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma announced that \$30 billion of these funds would be allocated starting this week to eligible entities based on how much Medicare revenue they get. While this provides a roadmap for a portion of the funds, Administrator Verma alluded to a different process for allocating additional funding. I write to request a written response detailing how and when the entirety of the \$100 billion for hospitals and health care providers will be allocated. Specifically, I ask that you answer the following questions:

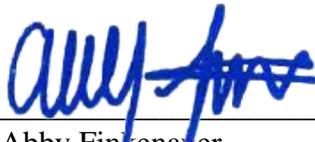
1. Will the entire \$100 billion in assistance made available under the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund be distributed to hospitals and health care providers based on Medicare revenue? If not, what distribution process will be used for allocating funds beyond the first \$30 billion?
2. What are your plans to ensure simplicity and efficiency throughout the funding process for hospitals and health care providers?
3. How do you plan to ensure that hospitals and health care providers with the greatest need are prioritized to receive resources?

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4. Do you plan to set aside any portion of the \$100 billion in funding specifically for rural hospitals and health care providers, which already faced financial challenges before the pandemic and experience unique risks now?
5. For the first \$30 billion, Administrator Verma announced that hospitals could use the funds they get in any way they see fit. Will hospitals retain this discretion for all allocations made from the \$100 billion in funding?
6. How many hospitals and health care providers do you expect can have their needs fully met given the \$100 billion available? Do you have an estimate of how much funding will go to hospitals and health care providers in Iowa?

Rescuing our hospitals and health care providers during this challenging time is key to keeping them on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring they stay viable long into the future. I look forward to hearing from you about this matter and working together on behalf of Iowans.

Sincerely,



Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress