

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD, 21244

Dear Administrator Verma:

We are writing to urge quick consideration of the two requested waivers submitted Sunday, March 15, by Washington Hospitals and Health Systems and Medicare, Medicaid Providers and Health Systems under section 1135 of the Social Security Act. The health care delivery system in Washington State is at a crisis point as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We are facing extreme stress to the health care system, including staffing, supplies, space and equipment. Federal law requirements must quickly be waived or altered. **We need immediate action to provide the flexibility needed to ensure hospitals can maximize care delivery in this crisis.**

The trajectory of the COVID-19 outbreak in Washington State is very similar to that in Northern Italy, where the health care system quickly became overwhelmed. Washington State hospitals are struggling with ongoing shortages of staffing and supplies as more and more COVID-19 cases in the state are confirmed. Washington hospitals' waiver request would give hospitals added flexibility as they seek to respond to the critical health care needs presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. We require immediate relief in the following areas:

- Hospital and Skilled Nursing Facility Medicare Conditions of Participation
- Telehealth
- Home Health
- HIPAA Security Requirements
- Delivery of Services in Alternative Clinic Locations
- Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program
- Teaching Hospitals
- Timely Filing Requirements for Billing
- Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID)
- Modifications to the existing 1115 waiver

Please see the attached request letters that were submitted previously to your office. The requested waivers will allow our health system to adapt to the rapidly escalating challenges presented by this pandemic. Our system is experiencing an overwhelming volume of patients seeking care. The system is responding by cancelling elective surgeries and many types of

routine care. Health care providers are working long shifts and stretching supplies. We respectfully urge the government to act quickly to do its part. As we struggle with staffing, supplies, and facilities, a blanket waiver of the federal requirements is necessary to allow Washington's hospitals to properly focus their efforts on curtailing the spread of the pandemic.

Sincerely,



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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Patty Murray  
Member of Congress



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Maria Cantwell  
Member of Congress



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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



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Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



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Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



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Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



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Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress