

March 18, 2020

To the Honorable Members of the Texas Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of our nearly 500 member hospitals and health systems, the Texas Hospital Association (THA) urges Congress to quickly pass critically needed direct financial assistance for hospitals and health systems to protect the public health and mitigate the economic turmoil caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We applaud Congress for the steps taken so far, but hospitals and health systems need unprecedented resources to combat the ongoing emergency. Directly supporting hospitals and health systems not only will help us care for our patients but will provide a stimulus to communities in need of financial stability during this challenging time.

Hospitals and health systems are making significant efforts to reconfigure operations to meet the growing surge of new patients due to COVID-19. THA urges Congress to provide financial assistance for hospitals making infrastructure investments, as well as for the purchase of equipment and supplies necessary to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. We also request adequate funding for the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), which is key in supplementing health and medical system response capabilities as they become overwhelmed.

Direct financial assistance to hospitals and health systems will help provide some of the resources they need to successfully control this infectious disease outbreak. Without it, there is significant risk to the stability of the country's hospital infrastructure and to the health of the general public. THA also urges Congress to offset the costs of uncompensated care, bad debt and charity care for treating coronavirus patients through a full payroll tax credit or other policy mechanisms.

We also urge careful consideration of federal funding to help with childcare services for healthcare workers. This will prove to be a critical aspect of our ability to respond as school districts close and demand for services related to the virus increase.

Finally, given the financial stress on hospitals due to their response to the pandemic, it is imperative that there be a withdrawal of any pending CMS actions that potentially reduce hospital payments, including the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule (MFAR). Similarly, a suspension of the Medicare sequester and permanent repeal of cuts to the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital payments would be appropriate given the magnitude of our frontlines response at this time.

THA is actively working with our members to obtain a thorough accounting of the costs they are incurring related to this crisis. We will provide that information to you as it becomes available, but we also recognize that the Congressional response is moving quickly. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions of if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Shaw". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "T" and "S".

Ted Shaw  
President/CEO  
Texas Hospital Association