

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C St SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Secretary Becerra:

We are contacting you today to follow up on our successful efforts in 2020 to ensure that TidalHealth Nanticoke, a rural, non-profit, community facility located in Seaford, Delaware, received its fair share of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Provider Relief Fund that was set aside and distributed to rural acute care general hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals, Rural Health Clinics, and Community Health Centers located in rural areas.

As you may know, these efforts resulted in TidalHealth Nanticoke receiving \$1.5M in rural CARES Act funds after being incorrectly disqualified for this funding when it was first released. Before the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) releases another tranche of Provider Relief Funds for rural hospitals, we are requesting that you work with us to make sure that TidalHealth Nanticoke receives all of the federal resources it is entitled to.

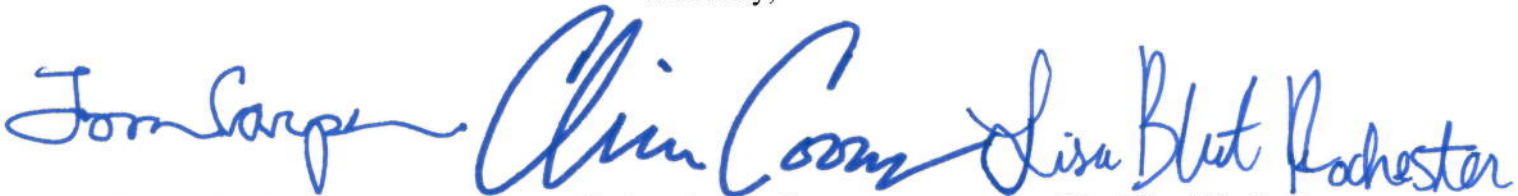
By way of further background, TidalHealth Nanticoke, as a rural Medicare Dependent Hospital (MDH), is experiencing all the same COVID-19 challenges that other small, rural hospitals across the nation are facing. However, as a rural MDH in Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) code 1, Nanticoke did not qualify for any of the critically needed funding from the rural set aside of the Provider Relief Fund. It is our understanding that TidalHealth Nanticoke was unique in the nation in this regard.

According to the methodology guidance issued on May 8, 2020 by HHS regarding the allocation to rural hospitals and providers, even though TidalHealth Nanticoke has Rural MDH status and meets the threshold for rural reclassification under CFR §412.103 (a)(2), because it is located in RUCA code 1, it was not eligible to receive these funds.

After we sent a letter to HHS Secretary Azar last year, the distribution criteria was amended and TidalHealth Nanticoke was provided with the additional resources. We are very concerned that future guidance regarding allocations from the provider relief fund may disqualify a deserving rural hospital from the aid it so desperately needs. We want to work with you to change the methodology used to distribute funding to ensure TidalHealth Nanticoke is not disqualified from any future Provider Relief Funds for rural hospitals.

Thank you for considering this important request and for your timely reply. Please have your staff contact either Anthony Theissen with Senator Carper at 202-224-2441, Corey Linehan with Senator Coons 202-224-5042, or Amber Ray with Rep. Blunt Rochester at 202-225-4165 with any questions, or to request additional information.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Carper
Member of Congress

Christopher A. Coons
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress