

COVID-19 RELIEF: Sustainability of Physician Practices and Patient Access to Specialty Medical Care

REQUEST

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine urges you to support the specific legislation below and to act before the end of the year to provide additional COVID-19 relief to sustain physician practices and maintain patient access to specialty medical care.

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 public health emergency has created unprecedented challenges to our nation's health care system. Physicians have faced inadequate supplies and safety equipment as well as rapidly changing guidance and directives from all levels of government. Many physicians had to suspend most elective and urgent in-person visits and procedures, were assigned to provide care outside their general practice area, had to delay COVID-19 care due to shortages of equipment such as ventilators, experienced inadequate testing, and had to delay treatment for patients with conditions other than COVID-19.

COVID-19 RELIEF

Additional COVID-19 relief is needed, and the Alliance urges that a relief package address the following:

Liability Reform – The [Coronavirus Provider Protection Act \(H.R. 7059\)](#) and the [SAFE TO WORK Act \(S. 4317\)](#) would provide health care professionals with limited and targeted protection from the serious threat of COVID-19-related liability lawsuits. The legislation appropriately excludes liability protections in situations of gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Financial Support – Extend the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to allow small businesses to take advantage of the remaining \$138 billion in allocated funds, while also expanding the expenses eligible for loan forgiveness to include COVID-19 prevention (including purchase of personal protective equipment or PPE) and retrofitting expenses. Also, the [Small Business PPE Tax Credit Act \(H.R. 7216\)](#) would help physician practices by allowing a tax credit of up to \$25,000 for the cost of qualified PPE including gloves, facial masks, protective gear, and cleaning supplies. Ensure fair accounting of pandemic-related costs and lost revenue within the Provider-Relief Fund (PRF). Finally, the CARES Act provided relief from the provider reimbursement cuts imposed pursuant to sequestration, but only through the end of 2020. Given that the public health emergency will continue to strain our nation's providers into the new year, we urge you to extend relief from the sequestration cuts for the duration of the public health emergency.

Workforce Shortages – [H.R. 5924](#) would authorize a loan repayment program to encourage specialty medicine physicians to serve in rural communities where there is a shortage of specialists. The [Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act \(H.R. 1763/S. 348\)](#) would improve the Graduate Medical Education (GME) system by increasing the number of Medicare-supported residency slots by 15,000 over the next five years, directing half of the new slots to training shortage specialties. Congress froze the number of slots more than twenty years ago. Updates are necessary to address population growth, shortages in certain specialties, physician burnout, and retirements.

CONTACT

To cosponsor the ***Coronavirus Provider Protection Act (H.R. 7059)***, please contact Hannah.King@mail.house.gov (Rep. Roe) or Elizabeth.Barrie@mail.house.gov (Rep. Correa).

To cosponsor the ***SAFE TO WORK Act (S. 4317)***, please contact Jeffrey_Last@cornyn.senate.gov (Sen. Cornyn).

To cosponsor **H.R. 5924**, please contact Kirsten.Wing@mail.house.gov (Rep. McKinley) or Alexandra.Morris@mail.house.gov (Rep. Welch).

To cosponsor the ***Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act (H.R. 1763)***, please contact Hillary.Beard@mail.house.gov (Rep. Sewell) or Jennifer.Tyler@mail.house.gov (Rep. Katko).

To cosponsor the ***Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act (S. 348)***, please contact Swarna_Vallurupalli@menendez.senate.gov (Sen. Menendez) or Ryan_Losak@boozman.senate.gov (Sen. Boozman).

To cosponsor the ***Small Business PPE Tax Credit Act (H.R. 7216)***, please contact Zachary.Weber@mail.house.gov (Rep. Lawrence) or Madni@mail.house.gov (Rep. Balderson).