



**Community Health Centers of Arkansas Inc.**  
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U.S. Senator John Boozman  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 17, 2020

Re: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

Dear Senator Boozman,

For years now, you have been a constant friend and advocate for Community Health Centers. Now, more than ever, we – indeed all of Arkansas -- need your influence and your friendship.

CHCs served more than 220,000 Arkansans in 2019, and we expect that number to grow by the thousands as we face the crisis of the Coronavirus pandemic.

We urgently need funds for ventilators, respirators, protective gear for our staff, testing capacity expansion, capital needs to construct for isolation wards and other areas to care for the expected rush on health care institutions. IT system are in a major need of upgrades, especially with the greater reliance on telehealth the Coronavirus requires.

Further, we need assistance in continuing to care for chronically ill patients who continue to require care, but now are vulnerable to the Coronavirus and in need of protection. Those most vulnerable, including the homeless and unemployed, will likely seek out CHCs for treatment as they will have the most difficulty in maintaining social distancing.

Also, much of our funding is set to expire May 22. To continue our capacity to provide access to quality health care, especially in rural poverty-stricken areas, we join with our national association in asking the 5-year funding proposal be approved. This will provide annually \$4 billion for CHCs nationwide as well as \$310 million for the National Health Service Corp. and \$126.5 million for the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education program, both highly necessary for CHCs to continue to grow our much-relied-upon service capacity. (Letter from NACHC enclosed)

This is an emergency. We trust you are taking it seriously. Thank you in advance for your diligent consideration as we join the fight for the public health needs of all Arkansans during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

LaShannon Spencer, Chief Executive Officer  
Community Health Centers of Arkansas

Allan Nichols, Chairman, Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Board of Directors  
Chief Executive Officer, Mainline Health Systems