

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Request for Relief for Pediatric Specialists and Primary Care Pediatricians from the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency Fund

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations whose members include medical doctors and surgeons practicing in pediatrics, pediatric medical subspecialties, and pediatric surgical subspecialties, we appreciate the work Congress has done to support physician practices during the coronavirus public health emergency, including the establishment of provider relief grants in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. However, to date, the distribution of these relief funds has left physicians who see no Medicare-enrolled patients behind. Our organizations are writing to urge you to ensure immediate financial relief payments to pediatric specialists and primary care pediatricians. Without this much needed assistance, our young and most vulnerable patients will be placed at risk with increasingly limited access to patient care that they need. This assistance must apply to all physicians who care for children and should not leave out any pediatric subspecialty providers.

Like other physician practices, the practices of pediatric specialists and primary care pediatricians, which are highly Medicaid-oriented, have been severely harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has quickly distributed CARES Act relief funds to health care providers that treat Medicare patients, practices that do not have Medicare claims are still waiting for assistance. In addition, they have not been able to access some other financial relief policies issued by HHS and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services because of the focus on Medicare. For example, these practices were not eligible for the Medicare Advanced or Accelerated Payment Program.

We, therefore, recommend that Congress take decisive action to **direct HHS to prioritize access to the new \$75 billion provider relief funds included in the interim COVID relief bill to providers who have not received relief grants, especially those in pediatrics and pediatric subspecialties.**

Our pediatric specialists and primary care pediatricians are facing major financial challenges. Substantial layoffs and even practice closures will threaten medically necessary and time-sensitive care for children during and after this public health emergency. We urge that you act to ensure delivery of immediate,

direct financial relief payments to our pediatric specialists and primary care pediatricians, like the assistance already provided to physicians that participate in Medicare.

Thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented time. Please do not hesitate to contact any of our respective organizations if you have any questions. We are happy to be a resource to you and your staff during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
American Urological Association
Child Neurology Foundation
Child Neurology Society
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Council of Pediatric Subspecialties
Endocrine Society
Heart Rhythm Society
North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecologists
North American Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition
Pediatric Endocrine Society
Pediatric Infectious Disease Society
Pediatric Pulmonology Training Director's Association
Scoliosis Research Society
Society for Pediatric Dermatology
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons