



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AAPCHO Commends Senate Passage of CARES Act, Calls for Long-term Funding for Health Centers

WASHINGTON – The Senate passed a \$2 trillion emergency relief package by a vote of 96-0 Wednesday night in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (S.3548) enhances critical emergency support but failed to extend long-term funding for health centers serving 28 million people, including over 1 million Asian Americans (AA), Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI), who are some of the most vulnerable populations disproportionately at risk.

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) Director of Policy and Advocacy Adam Carbullido released the following statement:

“The Senate passage of the CARES Act is a significant step forward and is encouraging, especially to our member health centers and other medical providers that have been stretched beyond capacity in addressing COVID-19. The bill heads to the House next with a vote expected tomorrow and while imperfect, AAPCHO encourages Representatives to pass this bill and for lawmakers to start working on additional relief.

“Among the many positive provisions contained in this bill, AAPCHO commends the agreement reached to expand telehealth services, which provides flexibility for our members as they triage and treat patients, directing those who may be infected to designated areas in order to protect patients and their health care workers.

“The inclusion of \$1.32 billion in emergency supplemental funding for health centers to respond to COVID-19 is a crucial step to immediately support health centers. However, these funds are less than one-third of what is needed to stabilize health centers as they shift resources, manpower, and operations to combat the pandemic. We are disappointed that Congress did not extend long-term reauthorization for community health centers, the National Health Services Corps, or teaching health centers, which will now need to be readdressed before November 30.

“Without long-term funding stability from Congress, health centers are unable to make long-term investments in staff hiring and retention, capital improvements, or plan programs. The pandemic demonstrates more than ever the need to build a strong public health foundation that is stable and prepared to meet both everyday community needs and emerging public health crises—and health centers are a key part of that.

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“Finally, we are concerned that this bill did not extend testing and treatment coverage in Medicaid for immigrants and their families, nor does it provide for language access or cultural competency programs needed to assist underserved communities. Current law leaves gaps that exclude legal permanent residents and other immigrants and residents from receiving testing and treatment through Medicaid for COVID-19. We strongly encourage Congress to fill these gaps in the next legislative package and ensure that everyone has access to care, regardless of immigration status, during this health emergency.

“AAPCHO and its members commend Congress and the administration for taking the first steps needed in this bill to address COVID-19. We urge Congress to take the additional steps to extend much needed long-term funding to stabilize community health centers, especially as circumstances change and additional support is needed in this critical time. We are committed to working with our members and partners to push for meaningful policy change to protect the overall safety, health, and well-being of AA, NHPI and all families during this crisis and beyond.”

For more information including in-language resources on COVID-19, visit coronavirus.aapcho.org.

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit www.aapcho.org.

Contact

Kristine Cecile Alarcon, MPH, (510) 671-5054, kalarcon@aapcho.org

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