

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As work begins on a fourth coronavirus legislative package, we write to strongly urge you to include emergency assistance for dialysis patients and dialysis care providers. Several of the largest dialysis treatment providers currently deliver dialysis services for over half a million Americans, with that number growing each year.

As you are aware, many Americans must travel outside their homes for dialysis treatment and can potentially become exposed to COVID-19 in the process. Individuals on dialysis must receive their treatments at least three times a week or they run the risk of serious medical complications, including death. As states and cities impose stay-at-home orders, public transportation options are becoming more difficult and medically risky for patients. We urge you to look at relief options regarding transportation to help those who may not be able to access or afford alternative options. These Americans simply do not have the luxury of being able to socially distance until the pandemic is over.

Adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) is also critical for the safety of patients and the front-line workers. There are reports of dialysis centers running out of PPE and the situation will likely worsen. This lack of PPE, coupled with dialysis patients having to travel for treatment, creates a potential scenario for widespread infection in the dialysis community and the general public. We urge you to take this need into consideration when determining PPE assistance to non-hospital but also critically important health delivery systems.

The consequences of rampant COVID-19 infection among the already vulnerable dialysis community are immediately apparent and serious. An additional step we encourage you to consider would be direct financial assistance to support Americans who receive dialysis treatments. The last thing these patients need to encounter now is the accumulation of medical bills and other debts because of the economic impact they are facing. At least one nonprofit organization, the American Kidney Fund, has set up an emergency fund for patient financial assistance that has been rapidly exhausted due to overwhelming demand. We are certain other non-profit organizations will do the same and will need financial assistance to continue supporting dialysis patients and other vulnerable patient populations.

Congress can and should help the dialysis community in its time of great need. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress