



March 23, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Senators Bennet and Barrasso:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to urge our strong support for inclusion of a draft amendment, the Immediate Relief for Rural Facilities and Providers Act of 2020, in the stimulus package (H.R. 748) currently under development. This amendment would specifically and directly support physician practices, recognizing the increased costs and reduced revenue being experienced by physicians on the frontlines of caring for COVID-19 patients, and other physicians whose practices are under severe economic stress as they shift to virtual visits.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 159,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Internal medicine specialists treat many of the patients at greatest risk from COVID-19, including the elderly and patients with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

Specifically, we applaud provisions in this draft amendment that would establish an emergency grant program for physician practices, and other eligible entities, during the COVID-19 crisis that provides a one-time lump sum payment commensurate with the practice's payroll expenses from Jan. 1 – Apr. 1, 2019. As we understand the amendment, payments under this program would be available to practices within 14 days of enactment of this amendment. We also acknowledge and appreciate a provision in the amendment that would establish a new low-interest loan program to physician practices that suffer significant financial distress as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, with no limits on the loan amounts and principal loan repayment deferral for up to three years. These provisions will provide physicians on the frontlines direct assistance as they try to keep their practices open and viable throughout and beyond the COVID-19 emergency.

ACP appreciates the work being done by Congress to address the COVID-19 public health and economic emergency. While we strongly support this amendment, we continue to urge Congress to

enact additional policies to sustain and support physicians and their practices in providing patients with the best possible care during this national emergency, as detailed in our March 22nd [letter](#) to Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. McLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert M. McLean, MD, MACP
President