March 17, 2020

Dear Members of Congress,

In the face of COVID-19, community health centers across the nation have taken heroic steps to provide additional support to the communities they serve. OCHIN has been on the front lines with these health centers as they are beginning to deploy virtual care capabilities through our Epic instance. OCHIN supports more than 200 community health centers that operate in urban and rural locations throughout the country as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit community-based health information technology (HIT) Collaborative. We predominantly care for the population most heavily impacted by COVID-19—those who are on Medicare, Medicaid, are uninsured, or underinsured.

These underfunded health centers are still under enormous pressure to provide the highest quality care in an increasingly challenging environment—which is further exacerbated by the fact that they are operating with temporary federal funding that will expire on May 22. Notably, without stable, long-term financing, it’s incredibly difficult to respond to the growing crisis. Stable funding would give the health care professionals the support they need to fully address this public health emergency and ensure we are leveraging all available resources to provide safe and efficient care to those in need. Most importantly, it would allow them to move to a strong, reliable virtual care system to provide both urgent and continuing care to support rural and underserved communities.

We know that Congress is moving rapidly to address this crisis and greatly appreciate the support included in the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (HR 6074). As you contemplate subsequent funding action to address COVID-19, we ask that you make long-term funding for community health centers an immediate priority by including the Community Health Investment, Modernization, and Excellence Act (CHIME) in future funding efforts.

OCHIN appreciates your support during these challenging times. Please let me know if you have any questions about this request or our coronavirus response more broadly.

Respectfully,

Sincerely,

Jennifer Stoll
EVP, Government Relations and Public Affairs