

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 14, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

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

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

On behalf of our constituents across New York City, we write to request your leadership in ensuring significant federal funding for safety-net health care provider infrastructure in any upcoming infrastructure legislation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the failures of our current public health system, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities, and it has highlighted the critical need for health care investments to ensure equitable access to high-quality care. Federal support is sorely needed to advance projects that will improve health care infrastructure in cities like New York, including long-deferred facility upgrades and modernizations.

Safety-net hospitals and essential health care facilities are often the sole providers of care in marginalized communities, including for low-income, uninsured, underinsured, publicly insured, and communities of color. At the same time, these providers are suffering from chronic underpayment and disinvestment, leaving many facilities with severe sustainability challenges, crumbling infrastructure, and declining services in the communities that need them the most. Without adequate federal funding, these safety-net and essential providers will continue to suffer from structural inequities that have perpetuated a pattern of disinvestment and neglect in many of our communities.

Hospitals and health care providers are a key component of our nation's infrastructure. They also drive economic growth in the form of jobs, directly employing nearly 5.9 million individuals while supporting 16.5 million jobs in their local communities and almost \$3 trillion in economic activity.¹ Unfortunately, hospital infrastructure continues to deteriorate nationwide, making

¹ See American Hospital Association fact sheet, https://www.aha.org/system/files/2018-06/econ-contribution-2018_0.pdf

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continued access to quality health care a constant concern in underserved areas. Furthermore, a weakened safety net will leave us unprepared to respond to future public health crises and pandemics, especially in the communities that have recently borne the greatest impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier this year, the White House recognized these issues when it stressed that the American Jobs Plan should “safeguard critical infrastructure and services, and defend vulnerable communities,” including the need to increase resilience for “the most essential services, including the electric grid; food systems; urban infrastructure; **community health and hospitals**; and our roads, rail and other transportation assets.”²

As Congress considers investments in infrastructure, any legislative package must include provisions to invest in and sustain our safety net hospitals and health care providers. Doing so will help correct for decades of neglect, ensuring continued access to high-quality health care services in the marginalized communities these facilities serve, both throughout New York City and across this nation.

We urge you to provide necessary funding for safety-net hospitals and health care providers in upcoming infrastructure legislation, allowing these providers to improve their facilities and their ability to provide quality, equitable care throughout the remainder of the COVID-19 pandemic and for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

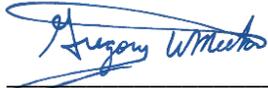


Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

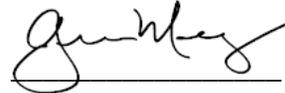
CC: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo

² See White House Statement on American Jobs Plan, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/> (emphasis added)

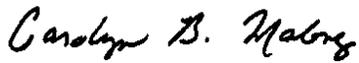
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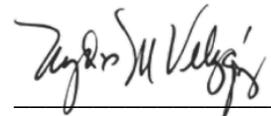
Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



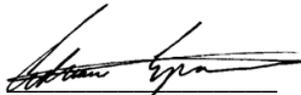
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



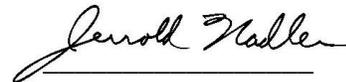
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
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Jerrold Nadler
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Hakeem Jeffries
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
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