



Leading for Better Health

March 19, 2021

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

As you saw, the hospital sector has spent the last year fighting to save lives and fight off the pandemic. HAP and its members asked for financial help from the commonwealth during that time, and I can assure you the need is still there. But, taking into account much of the feedback you gave us, the hospital community has refocused its request for resources in a meaningful way.

We seek support now to allocate grant resources from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) to the hospital sector for what we are calling the Health Care Heroes and Public Health Preparedness Act. We have designed this program to target three critical areas: (1) the hospital workforce; (2) the behavioral health system; and (3) public health infrastructure. We think policy makers are eager to provide resources needed to respond to the health crisis, generate economic activity, and prepare for future public health challenges.

Particularly, HAP proposes that \$650 million be set aside from ARPA to create a grant fund targeting these specific needs. Hospitals would submit applications and awards would be based on demonstrated capacity to deliver results, adequately documented costs and losses, and the alignment of the hospital application with the policy goals underlying the program.

With respect to our hospital workforce, employees have done incredible work during the pandemic, but they have also undergone tremendous strain. Monies from a successful grant application by a hospital in this area could provide specialized training to support innovative care delivery models (e.g. telemedicine), offer robust employee counseling and resiliency programs, or create retention programs for high-need clinical staff impacted by COVID-19.

The pandemic has also exposed, again, the lack of sufficient behavioral health resources to serve Pennsylvanians who need treatment. Hospitals would be able to seek grants from the fund to purchase equipment and software for telepsychiatry programs in rural or other underserved areas, for community programs to recruit and train behavioral health providers in high-need areas, or for programs to support personal care home capacity in communities experiencing hospital discharge delays.

Finally, hospitals served as the core of the public health response in every community, but resources and infrastructure must be augmented now to prepare for what lies ahead. Possible



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grant requests could build public-private partnership health infrastructure programs to prepare for future health emergencies locally, support vaccination outreach or other programs targeting underserved communities, or address financial impacts from the pandemic based on need.

I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks on this proposal, and I have attached a fact sheet for your review. Please know that our members are enormously grateful for all the work you did to respond to this pandemic, and I hope you will seriously consider our request as a means to work together to maintain and strengthen our health care system, our workforce, and Pennsylvania as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Carter', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Andy Carter
President and Chief Executive Officer

Attachment

c: Mike Brunelle, Chief of Staff
Jen Swails, Secretary of the Budget