

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 26, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,


We write to express our full support for Arkansas's Medicaid Section 1115 Demonstration Project (the "Demonstration") submitted by Governor Asa Hutchinson to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This Demonstration is of true national significance in that it will allow Arkansas to respond to the COVID-19 health emergency and to avert the threatening economic crisis. This proposal will provide access to the care Arkansans need, and it will help keep our health care providers' businesses open and their workforce employed.

In a little over two weeks, the COVID-19 has completely changed the health care delivery system in Arkansas and across the nation. Hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, residential facilities, and other licensed practitioners must now re-engineer their practice patterns to protect the lives of their patients and their employees. Arkansas's proposed Demonstration places a particular emphasis on our rural providers who face even greater challenges due to distance and less infrastructure compared to more populous areas.

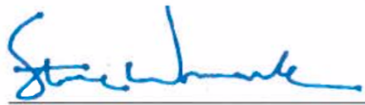
This proposed Demonstration will help jumpstart the ability of health care providers to respond most efficiently and effectively by giving them certainty and flexibility to use funds in ways Medicaid does not typically finance. Structuring payments in this approach also ensures program integrity as the Arkansas Department of Human Services must approve in advance the request for funding. Furthermore, it provides greater program integrity protection because costs will be directly auditable and is less complex than building increases into rates.

Most importantly, providers will be paid to continue to deliver services rather than reimbursed for lost revenue. It will keep everyone from the receptionist to the home health worker to the clinic nurse fully employed, which in turn will allow them to continue to support their families, to pay their bills, and to keep money in the local economy. Healthcare providers at all levels, not just hospitals, need access to new financing to help them adapt to the COVID-19. We deeply appreciate your consideration, and we urge the swift approval of Governor Hutchinson's request for this Demonstration.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator


Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator


Steve Womack
Member of Congress


French Hill
Member of Congress


Rick Crawford
Member of Congress


Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

cc: Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Honorable Seema Verma, Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Mr. Russell Vaught, Deputy Director, Office of Management & Budget