

BOBBY L. RUSH

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

March 18, 2020

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor
State of Illinois
100 West Randolph Street Suite 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601-3112

Dear Governor Pritzker:

As you know, in January, Advocate Trinity Hospital, Mercy Hospital & Medical Center, South Shore Hospital, and St. Bernard Hospital signed an agreement to create a new, independent healthcare system. All four hospitals operated at a loss in 2018 due to insufficient inpatient cases and decreases in reimbursement for Medicaid patients and the uninsured.¹ While the hospitals are working on creating at least one new facility, it is important that we ensure their *continued* capacity during the coronavirus pandemic.

It is incumbent on us to ensure that everyone has access to the medical care they need. While this virus does not discriminate based on zip-code, hospitals that take disproportionate levels of uncompensated care as well as patients on Medicare and Medicaid may find themselves facing financial hardships. Moreover, according to the Illinois Health and Hospital Association, uncompensated care is expected to increase significantly as uninsured and underinsured individuals seek testing and treatment for the coronavirus. During this pandemic, we cannot afford for our healthcare facilities to lack the resources they need, and it would be unthinkable for a hospital to be forced to close due to lack of adequate compensation.

As such, I am writing to you today to request that you work expeditiously with the General Assembly to provide an influx of state funds directly to the hospitals in our state. These funds should prioritize underserved hospitals, who may not be able to continue operating without supplemental funding, and should be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of our hospitals as the situation changes in the days, weeks, and months to come.

¹ "4 Chicago Hospitals Announce Tentative \$1.1B Merger Plan." AP NEWS. Associated Press, January 23, 2020. <https://apnews.com/c7a3c140644de6b27a54d246f5e637f3>.

I remain committed to working with my colleagues in the U.S. Congress and with the Administration to prioritize federal funding, but we must use all the resources at our disposal.

While I understand that the Illinois state budget is tight, it is, frankly, a matter of life and death, and as such, I urge you to ensure our hospitals have an influx of state funding as soon as possible. If I may be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bobby L. Rush". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress