

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is investigating recent reports of misallocated COVID-19 relief funds intended to help low-income hospitals.¹ Instead of helping hospitals most in need, nearly \$17 billion of COVID-19 relief funds went to hospitals with reported profits of more than \$53 billion, while \$35 billion went to hospitals that reported a loss of almost \$130 billion.² It is crucial that we understand how the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) distributed these funds to hospitals that did not need it while hospitals in need received minimal benefit. We request documents and communications to assist the Committee's oversight of HHS's administration of COVID-19 relief funds to low-income hospitals.

Congress appropriated \$178 billion in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Paycheck Protection and Health Care Enhancement Act, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, to help keep hospitals and other health care providers open.³ Of the \$178 billion in this Provider Relief Fund (PRF), 1,257 money-making hospitals received \$16.7 billion, while collectively reporting \$53.6 billion in profits.⁴ Conversely, 1,644 unprofitable hospitals received only \$35 billion from the PRF despite reporting a loss of \$129.1 billion during the period.⁵ Inova Health Systems in Northern Virginia, which received \$186.1 million, eliminated more than 400 jobs while reporting a profit of \$255.5 million in 2020 and 2021.⁶ Meanwhile, in Elmira, NY, the Arnot Ogden Medical Center received just \$18.5 million despite losing money in 2020 and 2021 due to lost revenue caused by the pandemic response.⁷

¹ Melanie Evans, et. al., *Billions in COVID Aid Went to Hospitals That Didn't Need It*, WALL STREET JOURNAL, (Dec. 4, 2022).

² *Id.*

³ *Hospital's Compliance with the Provider Relief Fund Balance Billing Requirement for Out-Of-Network Patients*, U.S. Dep't. of Health and Human Serv. Office of the Inspector Gen.

⁴ *Supra* n.1.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

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We are concerned about HHS's decisions to provide PRF funds to highly profitable hospitals in wealthy areas while rural hospitals risked going bankrupt as they tried to provide care to Americans in need. To assist the Committee's oversight of the distribution of funds intended to keep hospitals and other health care providers open, please provide the following documents and information no later than April 25, 2023:

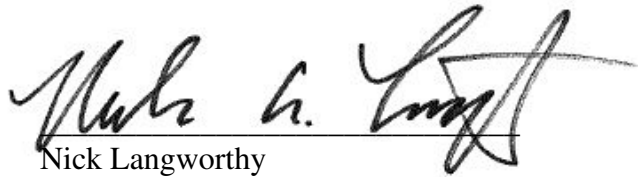
1. All documents and communications related to the decision-making process for which hospitals, providers, or other entities received funds from the PRF;
2. All documents and communications between the White House and HHS related to the PRF from January 20, 2021, to the present;
3. All documents and communications related to hospitals, providers or other entities which received PRF funds and laid off staff during the pandemic;
4. All documents and communications related to hospitals, providers or other entities which received PRF funds and how many claims related to medical debt they made against patients;
5. A list of all hospitals, providers, or other entities that received PRF funds and how much they received; and
6. All documents and communications related to the recoupment of PRF funds from hospitals, providers, or other entities which were not qualified for those funds.

To ask any follow-up or related questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for cooperating with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability



Nick Langworthy
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability