

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 8, 2022

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

As bipartisan members of the Georgia delegation, we are writing today to encourage the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to approve an innovative approach to address healthcare workforce shortages known as *Georgia: Strengthening the Reinvestment Of a Necessary Workforce* (GA-STRONG).

This program is a component of a broader set of Medicaid initiatives in Georgia that relies upon a directed supplemental payment mechanism to allocate Medicaid funding to eligible teaching hospitals. The funds delivered through the program provides Georgia health care providers with the necessary support to develop a more stable and diverse healthcare workforce across the spectrum of care, including geographic areas with healthcare workforce shortages. This innovative program focuses on improving direct patient care access which will lead to greater engagement and improved patient outcomes for Medicaid members statewide.


Hospitals have faced enormous stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including exacerbated workforce shortages. According to data regularly reported by the Department of Health and Human Services, Georgia has consistently been in the top ten states for critical staffing shortages.¹ GA-STRONG will provide \$746 million for teaching hospitals to create and expand statewide approaches to develop, stabilize and diversify the workforce at all levels of care. Along with improving the staffing crisis, these additional funds will allow hospitals to invest in programs that improve outcomes in high priority areas, including maternal health and chronic disease management, for Georgians across the state.

The complex crises of workforce shortage and health inequity are urgent matters that require action. We urge CMS to promptly review and consider the preprint applications for Georgia to implement this Medicaid directed payment program. It is our sincere hope CMS will approve this program expeditiously. Thank you in advance for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



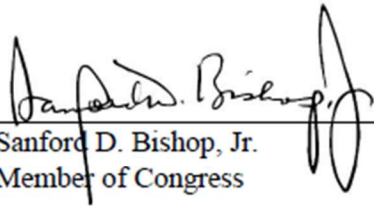
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



David Scott
Member of Congress



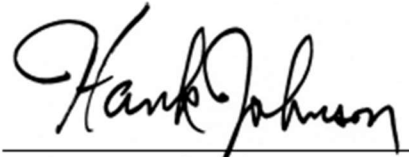
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



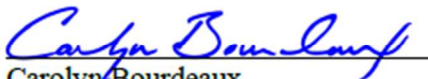
Austin Scott
Member of Congress



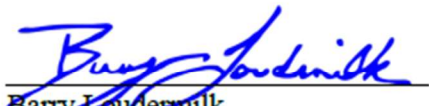
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Carolyn Bourdeaux
Member of Congress



Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress



A. Drew Ferguson IV
Member of Congress



Rick W. Allen
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

¹ Department of Health and Human Services, "COVID-19 Reported Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity by State Timeseries." Accessed online June 2022 via healthdata.gov.