



June 2, 2021

## CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

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University of California Health  
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Oakland, CA 94607

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### ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTERS

UC Davis Health  
UC Riverside Health  
UC San Diego Health  
UCI Health  
UCLA Health  
UCSF Health

### HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

Schools of Dentistry  
Schools of Medicine  
Schools of Nursing  
Schools of Optometry  
Schools of Pharmacy  
Schools of Public Health  
School of Veterinary Medicine

### INSTITUTES

Global Health Institute

Dear Members of Congress:

Our country has spent the last 15 months fighting a pandemic that has claimed the lives of more than 590,000 Americans and exposed serious cracks in our nation's health care system.

As the head of University of California Health (UCH), I can report that our health care providers across the UC system did tremendous work under the most difficult circumstances to treat and save the lives of our fellow Californians. I want to thank Congress for providing UCH with the needed resources that allowed us to do this critical, lifesaving work.

As we look to the future, we know that there is much to do to bolster our nation's health care infrastructure and we ask Congress to pass legislation that makes critical investments that will benefit patients across the nation.

President Biden's American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan proposes making essential investments in a variety of important equity priorities, including health care equity. These plans also contain other key health proposals such as \$200 billion to expand and extend Affordable Care Act premium tax credits and \$1 billion to expand broadband to help expand telehealth care.

As Congress prepares to draft legislation to strengthen our nation's infrastructure, we ask that you invest in physical infrastructure to ensure that we can quickly add new intensive care unit beds when and where they are needed. We ask that you invest in our nation's workforce infrastructure so that we have well-trained people to provide care. And we ask that you invest in the life-saving research taking place at Academic Health Centers (AHCs) and equip them with the tools they need to lead the country successfully through future pandemics.

To meet these goals, UC requests that Congress:

- **Provide access to low-cost capital** to allow health centers to make preparedness upgrades through a combination of tax-exempt financing (including Advance Refunding bonds, highlighted below); reviving the Hill-Burton program; supporting robust annual funding for the Hospital Preparedness Program; and providing the opportunity to pay back loans made through Medicare's Accelerated Advance Payments Program at a lower interest rate and over a longer period of time.
  - o **Re-instatement of Advance Refunding Bonds** would make available a critical economic tool to ensure that entities which issue Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds, including state and local governments, and certain public universities, including UC, are able to refinance existing bonds at certain points to take advantage of lower interest rates. Advance Refunding Bonds would provide UC with an important debt management tool that would allow the University to realize significant cost savings over time on its current debt and make resources available sooner to address the system's outstanding capital and infrastructure needs.
  - o **Seismic:** Natural disasters cause significant damage to the nation's infrastructure. In 2017, the Federal Emergency Management Agency determined that earthquakes are estimated to cost the nation \$6.1 billion annually in building stock losses. UC requests robust investments for seismic retrofits to ensure public safety, minimize economic loss and academic disruption.
- **Create 14,000 additional GME slots** to train critically-needed physicians and meet a growing national shortage of doctors; support robust funding for Title VII and Title VIII health workforce development programs, especially funding for programs that help prepare health care professionals providing care in underserved communities.
- **Expand digital and data infrastructure**, including expanding access to high-speed internet across the country, to support telehealth access; invest in data security for health care providers and educational institutions, to protect sensitive information.
- **Strengthen the Strategic National Stockpile and public health infrastructure** to ensure that health care workers are prepared for the next emergency; encourage more domestic manufacturing of medical supplies.
- **Support AHCs in their unique role in the health care system** by investing in life-saving research and by finding ways to harness and leverage their collective expertise during a national public health crisis.
- **Make permanent telehealth services that have been made available under the public health emergency.**

UC President Michael V. Drake has outlined in a separate letter the UC systems' non-health priorities, some of which overlap – including access to low-cost funds for capital improvements – and support for research, as well as seeking to double the Pell Grant award to \$13,000.

Thank you for your continued support of the University of California. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or UC Associate Vice President for Federal Governmental Relations Chris Harrington. He can be reached at (202) 974-6314 or by email at [Chris.Harrington@ucdc.edu](mailto:Chris.Harrington@ucdc.edu).

Sincerely,

*Carrie Byington*

Carrie L. Byington, MD  
Executive Vice President  
University of California Health

cc: UC President Michael V. Drake, MD  
Provost and Executive Vice President Michael T. Brown  
Senior Vice President Claire Holmes  
Associate Vice President for Federal Governmental Relations Chris Harrington