

September 4, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Murray and Ranking Member Collins:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners — including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers — and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is writing to request additional funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which provides support for authorized federal disaster activities. At a time when hospitals are facing numerous financial challenges, DRF contributions are vital to hospitals in serving their communities.

As you know, this year there have been storms and wildfires for which the president of the United States issued disaster declarations. FEMA is obligated to aid with these emergencies and those prior disasters for which applications are still outstanding, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

FEMA on Aug. 7 declared the DRF is projected to no longer meet funding needs for all activities under the Stafford Act, leaving the agency to prioritize only those projects that are deemed "immediate needs funding" (INF). According to agency, "When the DRF is projected to be insufficient to meet all Stafford Act requirements, FEMA must prioritize lifesaving and life-sustaining activities. Under INF, FEMA prioritizes response and



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urgent recovery efforts without interruption. However, new obligations not necessary for lifesaving and life-sustaining activities will be paused.”

While we understand the requirement in the short-term to prioritize funding for more pressing life-sustaining needs, hospitals across the country have tens of billions of dollars in outstanding applications with FEMA which can no longer be obligated and paid. Some of these are investments made during an unprecedented public health emergency, in which our hospitals and health systems were essential to treating and protecting their communities. The outlays included purchasing additional personal protective and other equipment, hiring staff and making alternations to facilities. We ask Congress to continue to ensure the DRF is fully funded to sustain hospitals and health systems in providing care to their communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to working with you to advance additional funding for the DRF.

Sincerely,

/s/

Stacey Hughes
Executive Vice President