



July 15, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader, United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer:

On behalf of the Trauma Center Association of America (TCAA), and our life-saving trauma center members, please accept our deep appreciation for the efforts of Congress to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. We applaud your efforts to secure the economic relief and stimulus that is sorely needed for families and communities, along with funding for those fighting this devastating virus in our healthcare institutions. As you negotiate the next stimulus package to mitigate the health and economic effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, we request that you provide targeted emergency funding to trauma centers across the country.

Trauma centers and systems play key roles in both the preparedness and response to pandemics. They maintain and support a 24/7 infrastructure for deploying time-sensitive, life-saving interventions and advanced critical care. In addition, regionalized trauma systems ensure coordination among state and local governments, and other health providers to ensure that anticipated surges of critical patients have access to care.

In its COVID-19 legislation, Congress has provided critical funding in the provider relief fund for hospitals and public health departments. However, because trauma systems occupy a unique position in our nation's healthcare system, they have not yet received adequate aid from these funds. Trauma centers throughout the country are experiencing significant financial hardship – a hardship that preceded but is exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak. Even before the pandemic, many trauma centers have struggled to adapt in the face of significant increases opioid-related trauma and even the impacts of seasonal influenza. COVID-19 has intensified this problem, placing strain on an already strained emergency response infrastructure. A recent TCAA survey found that nearly half of trauma center respondents do not feel that their facility is adequately prepared for a public health emergency.

Federal resources for trauma centers and systems have deteriorated to dangerous levels in recent years. Ten years ago, Congress restructured several federal grant programs to ensure that trauma centers can fulfill their unique round-the-clock mission with funding to support trauma care and system infrastructure. Despite an increase in public health emergencies – including mass casualty events and the current COVID pandemic – Congress has not appropriated new funding trauma center and systems grants in over ten years.

With this lack of funding in mind, TCAA requests that Congress appropriate \$500 million as part of the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund to fund activities necessary to mitigate the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on, and support the core mission activities of, trauma centers, such as staffing, training, technology, surge capacity, data collection, regional and state coordination, and other uncompensated costs associated with maintaining a 24-hour state of readiness and response.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our request and for your leadership during this national and global health crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Ward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jennifer Ward
President
TCAA