**TO BE PLACED ON AAP CHAPTER LETTERHEAD**

**DATE**

**NAME
TITLE [Medicaid Director] (Medicaid Directors addresses can be found** [**here**](https://medicaiddirectors.org/about/medicaid-directors/)**)
ADDRESS
ADDRESS**

Dear Director [NAME],

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [STATE] Chapter, a nonprofit organization representing [NUMBER HERE] pediatricians dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of all children across the state, applauds all that our state is doing during this time of unprecedented crisis so that our health care system can dynamically respond to the needs of patients and families. We write today about a matter of urgent concern to the [STATE] pediatric safety net—**the need for immediate financial relief so that the pediatric practices of this state can continue to operate and serve children**.

Now more than ever, pediatric care is needed in our state. Recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data shows a precipitous drop in orders for ACIP-recommended vaccines since the beginning of this crisis.[[1]](#footnote-2) We as a state cannot risk a secondary outbreak during this COVID-19 pandemic, and we are reminding parents of the many ways we are here to care for families safely, today. Moreover, the CDC has also recently issued an emergency alert to physicians on the identification and tracking of cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), and we pediatricians are on the front lines of such care and surveillance. We continue to also provide other much-needed acute and well-child care, adapting our clinical practices to keep children safe and healthy during this crisis. Our commitment to [STATE] children and the Medicaid program is unwavering, and a foundation of our state's continued and future health.

However, COVID-19 has meant that many practices are seeing significantly fewer patients just as we incur additional costs to adapt to the crisis. This has stressed practice finances and pushed many—including those that see a large share of Medicaid patients—to the brink of closure. [CHAPTER/STATE SPECIFIC INFORMATION HERE, SUCH AS REPORTED % DECREASES IN PATIENT VOLUME AND ANECDOTES].

To continue to be there for children enrolled in Medicaid, our practices need urgent financial help.

To address this immediate crisis, **we are asking that [NAME OF STATE MEDICAID AGENCY HERE] work together with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide financial relief to [STATE] pediatric practices through the Medicaid program**.

On May 14, CMS released a [CMCS Informational Bulletin](https://www.medicaid.gov/sites/default/files/Federal-Policy-Guidance/Downloads/cib051420.pdf) outlining a number of options Medicaid agencies have to increase funding to providers via managed care organizations (MCOs) during the COVID-19 crisis, including:

* Adjusting capitation rates to reflect increases in Medicaid fee-for-service payments;
* Making retainer payments to habilitation and personal care service providers; and
* Using state directed payments to require MCOs to enhance payment to providers during the crisis.

The Informational Bulletin further indicates that Medicaid MCOs can choose to make advanced payments to providers to ensure MCOs meet access to care and network adequacy requirements. Moreover, the guidance clarifies that state directed payments can be implemented retrospectively to the start of the current contract rating period.

These authorities, in addition to others policy experts have identified, [[2]](#footnote-3),[[3]](#footnote-4) should be used now to make additional and increased Medicaid payments to clinicians during the COVID-19 emergency. Our state should examine these authorities as opportunities to immediately address this crisis and work quickly to preserve the pediatric infrastructure of our state. We encourage you to immediately begin a dialogue with CMS as federal funding of such payments must also be brought to bear.

We further encourage state contracted Medicaid MCOs to make advanced payments in an effort to ensure continued access to care and to meet network adequacy and medical loss ratio (MLR) standards. The Informational Bulletin outlines risk strategies that may serve to protect both MCOs and the state should they do so.

[STATE] pediatricians have a long history of commitment to the children of our state as well as to Medicaid. We are asking at this critical time that you stand with us and ensure our continued ability to provide much needed care to the children in our care.

We look forward to your consideration and response to this proposal. Please contact [NAME/TITLE] at [EMAIL/PHONE] to discuss this further. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
AAP Chapter President

1. Santoli J, Lindley M, et al. Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Routine Pediatric Vaccine Ordering and Administration — United States, 2020. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (*MMWR*). May 15, 2020. Online at: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e2.htm?s_cid=mm6919e2_w> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. State Health & Value Strategies/Manatt. Targeted Options for Increasing Medicaid Payments to Providers During COVID-19 Crisis. April 2020. Online at: <https://www.shvs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Targeted-Options-for-Increasing-Medicaid-Payments-to-Providers-During-COVID-19-Crisis.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. State Health & Value Strategies/Manatt. Medicaid Enhanced Provider Payment Strategies and COVID-19: Questions and Answers. April 2020. Online at: <https://www.shvs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SHVS-QA_-Medicaid-Enhanced-Provider-Payment.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)