

October 19, 2021

The Honorable Maxine Waters
2221 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick McHenry
2004 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

Dear Chair Waters and Ranking Member McHenry:

I am the Executive Director of the [Healthcare Anchor Network](#), a growing national collaboration of over 65 leading healthcare systems building more inclusive and sustainable local economies. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and help an economy reeling from the public health crisis. As vaccinations increase, businesses reopen, and families start to resume pre-pandemic activities, our member hospitals and health systems are committed to continuing to provide needed health services, as well as supporting a robust and inclusive economic recovery. For a hospital, addressing housing, one of the most important social determinants of health, isn't just the right thing to do for our patients and communities—it also helps bend the cost curve by creating a healthier community.

We urge you to include robust investments in the Build Back Better Act to expand affordable housing for working families and lower-income people, and recommend:

Increasing funding for housing vouchers, housing tax credits, and the HOME program as well as other key housing programs so that people have affordable and safe homes. We know that you are concerned about the millions of individuals and families who continue to experience the perilousness of housing instability, eviction, and homelessness.

As you are aware, the United States was in the grips of a pervasive affordable housing crisis long before the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting rural, suburban, and urban communities alike. There is a national shortage of more than 7 million homes affordable and available to people with the lowest incomes. Rental housing affordability has worsened dramatically over the past 15 years, and more households than ever are struggling to pay the rent and make ends meet. High rental costs and low wages have forced three-fourths of our nation's lowest-income renters (disproportionately renters of color) to spend more than half of their incomes on rent and utilities every month. As a result, these households have few resources to cover other necessities, like medical care or nutritious food, and are at greater risk of housing instability and, in worst cases, homelessness – all problems linked to serious adverse effects on children's health and development.

Research clearly shows that investments to make housing more affordable generate multiplying returns across [many sectors](#). Stable, affordable housing options located in neighborhoods of opportunity are associated with better educational outcomes, better physical and mental health outcomes, lower healthcare expenditures, greater food security, stronger upward economic mobility and growth, greater racial and gender equity, fewer encounters with the criminal legal system, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and more.

A stable place to live supports the health of all people across the life course, as well as creates thriving communities. We urge Congress to support these federal housing programs. Thank you for your consideration. We stand ready to work with you as you advance these necessary solutions to build a strong and resilient economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. A. [unclear]".

Executive Director