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December 2, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Leahy, and Vice Chairman Shelby:

As you finalize funding levels for this fiscal year's funding package, I write on behalf of the physicians and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA) to urge you to provide all available federal disaster assistance to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the State of Florida. Unfortunately, Puerto Rico and Florida were devastated by recent hurricanes Fiona and Ian, including suffering damage to their health care infrastructure and services, with total damage estimated in the billions of dollars. While federal agencies quickly responded after both hurricanes, recovery efforts will require significant federal funding.

In particular, Puerto Rico has been severely impacted over the past five years by a series of disasters, including Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the 2019-2020 earthquakes, the COVID-19 public health emergency, and most recently Hurricane Fiona. As you know, funding inequities have plagued Puerto Rico's health care system, including struggles with lower Medicaid caps and Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) than most of the U.S., and Puerto Rico needs both short-term funding and long-term solutions to help improve its health care infrastructure and Medicaid and Medicare financing. The AMA supports general disaster funding for Puerto Rico and the State of Florida to assist with their rebuilding efforts following Hurricanes Fiona and Ian, as well as congressional action to provide adequate, stable, long-term funding for Puerto Rico's and other U.S. territories' Medicaid programs.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD