

National Headquarters  
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www.astho.org  
@ASTHO

June 24, 2019

Senator Chuck Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Ron Wyden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Greg Walden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Wyden, Chairman Pallone, and Ranking Member Walden:

On behalf of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), we are writing to express our deep concern regarding the impending Medicaid financing cliff – or funds that will expire at the end of September 2019 that were provided to the territories through the Affordable Care Act, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017, the Balanced Budget Act of 2018, and the recently passed disaster aid package. The U.S. territories include American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). ASTHO is the national nonprofit organization representing the state and territorial public health agencies of the United States, U.S. territories, and Washington, D.C. ASTHO's members, the chief health officials of these jurisdictions, are dedicated to formulating and influencing sound public health policy and assuring excellence in state-based public health practice.

ASTHO strongly urges Congress to provide long-term stable Medicaid financing for the territories by raising or eliminating the cap on federal dollars so that territories can continue to protect and promote the health of their populations. The impending fiscal cliff in September 2019 threatens the substantial improvements over the past ten years in the delivery of healthcare, further eroding the economies of the territories and threatening the health and well-being of these populations. In addition, recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico, USVI, and typhoons in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands have contributed to these economic challenges. Unless Congress acts, the U.S. territories' Medicaid programs will become gravely underfunded.

Finally, the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for the territories should be based on the same formula used to determine a state's FMAP. This would equitably reflect the relative need of each jurisdiction. The unrealistically low FMAP in territories combined with the artificial

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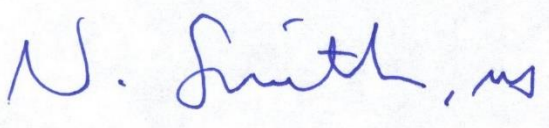
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cap on overall Medicaid expenditures hobble territories' ability to meet the basic health needs of their communities.

If you have any further questions or require additional information please contact Carolyn McCoy ([cmccoy@astho.org](mailto:cmccoy@astho.org)), ASTHO's senior director of federal government relations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "N. Smith, MD, MPH". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small "ms" at the end.

Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH  
President-Elect, ASTHO  
Director and State Health Officer  
Arkansas Department of Health