

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Katie Porter  
1117 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

17 April 2020

Dear Senator Warren and Representative Porter:

We are writing in reply to your tweet and letter regarding the financial security of physicians in our country. Like you, we have the utmost respect and gratitude for healthcare workers on the frontlines of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to address this crisis, treat patients, protect doctors – and ensure that our country’s healthcare delivery system remains functional during this current pandemic and in the years to come.

Like many other healthcare providers, Envision has made COVID-19 care our primary mission and has directed immense resources to those efforts. Hundreds of Envision clinicians have voluntarily redeployed from around the nation to Mount Sinai Health System and other hospitals in the Greater New York area that are overwhelmed by the surge in COVID-19 patients. Many Envision anesthesiologists have voluntarily offered to provide COVID-19 care, putting their airway management skills to use in ICUs and intubating the sickest patients. We have secured millions of items of personal protective equipment (PPE) for clinicians and hospital partners affected by shortages. Envision is our doctors. Our doctors are Envision. Those doctors are doing great work at the risk of their own personal health and the health of their families.

We sincerely appreciate that you also understand that it is a difficult time financially for the healthcare industry. The nation’s healthcare system has experienced a drastic drop in patient volume since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. Even as COVID-19 fills emergency departments in hot spots around the country, Envision’s overall emergency volume is actually down 45 percent.

Furthermore, doctor visits and surgeries are on hold because of responsible measures to fight the pandemic, such as social distancing, stay-at-home orders, and government mandates against routine care.

This loss in patient volume has created an unsustainable situation for providers across the country. When patients stay home, doctors have fewer appointments, fewer shifts, and reduced revenue. The force of the pandemic and its economic repercussions threatens all of our nation’s healthcare providers, whether they are large or small -- and whether they are publicly traded, taxpayer funded, non-profit, or privately owned.

Envision has been operating at a significant daily loss for weeks. As a result, we were recently forced to make difficult decisions to preserve our ability to care for COVID-19 patients and preserve our long-term ability to treat all patients. Before making any of those decisions, we implemented a 50 percent pay cut

for senior leadership. Again, Envision is far from the only provider group that has been faced with difficult choices.

We – our entire executive team and the doctors we support – are grateful that Congress directed funds to the Health and Human Services Department in the last emergency funding bill to help mitigate some of the financial turmoil taking place in the healthcare sector. However, please know that most of those funds were directed to hospitals, not doctors.

We welcome the opportunity to work together to make sure that all medical professionals receive the resources they need to stay on the front lines of the pandemic and make sure we have a healthcare system in place to care for patients once this crisis passes.

Sincerely,



Jim Rehtin  
President and CEO  
Envision Healthcare



Doug Smith, M.D.  
President  
Envision Physician Services