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July 16, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar

Secretary

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

200 Independence Avenue SW

Washington, DC 20201

RE: CARES Act Provider Relief Fund – Request for additional time to apply

Dear Secretary Azar,

I write on behalf of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) to urge the department to allow certain providers to be able to request additional funds through the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund (Provider Relief Fund).

Established in 1943, the AAAAI is a professional organization with more than 7,000 members in the United States, Canada and 72 other countries. This membership includes allergist/immunologists (A/I), other medical specialists, allied health and related healthcare professionals—all with a special interest in the research and treatment of patients with allergic and immunologic diseases.

Several of our providers received initial funding due to the Medicare patients that they serve and missed the June 3 deadline to apply for additional funds. Given that these providers serve a large proportion of Medicaid patients, these providers incorrectly assumed that the best way to apply for future funds would be through the Medicaid and CHIP allotment. Unfortunately, when the new Medicaid and CHIP portal was made available, the program made it clear that those who had received funds due to the Medicare allocation would not be eligible to apply.ⁱ Further, press reports have indicated that HHS is considering allowing some providers who missed the June 3 deadline to apply at a later date, in light of concerns raised from certain mental health and

(more)

substance abuse providers. Rather than focus on certain specialties, given widespread confusion, **we urge HHS to allow ALL providers who missed the June 3 deadline to apply for additional Provider Relief Funds to be eligible for future allocations.**

We appreciate the opportunity to share our request regarding the Provider Relief Fund. Should you have any questions, please contact Sheila Heitzig, Director of Practice and Policy, at sheitzig@aaaai.org or (414) 272-6071.

Sincerely,



Mary Beth Fasano, MD, MSPH, FAAAAI
President
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

¹ HHS FAQ:

[Can a healthcare provider that has a primarily Medicaid-focused practice that received a small initial General Distribution payment, but forewent applying for an additional General Distribution payments, now apply for the Medicaid and CHIP Distribution? \(Modified 6/25/2020\)](#)

No, if a healthcare provider was eligible for the first phase of the General Distribution payment, even if it rejected the payment, it is not eligible for a Medicaid and CHIP Distribution payment. All providers that received an initial General Distribution payment needed to submit revenue information in to the Provider Portal by June 3, 2020, to be considered for an additional payment for a total distribution of at least 2% of gross receipts. ***Providers that are not eligible for this distribution may be eligible for future allocations of the Provider Relief Fund.***