

August 15, 2019

Ms. Michal Rhymer-Browne
Assistant Commissioner
Department of Human Services, U.S. Virgin Islands
1303 Hospital Ground, Suite 1
St. Thomas, VI 00802

Dear Ms. Rhymer-Browne:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Health on Thursday, June 20, 2019 at the hearing entitled “Strengthening Health Care in the U.S. Territories for Today and Into the Future.” We appreciate the time and effort you gave as a witness before the Subcommittee.

Pursuant to Rule 3 of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, members are permitted to submit additional questions to the witnesses for their responses, which will be included in the hearing record. Attached are questions directed to you from certain members of the Committee. In preparing your answers to these questions, please address your responses to the member who has submitted the questions using the Word document provided with this letter.

To facilitate the publication of the hearing record, please submit your responses to these questions by no later than the close of business on Friday, August 30, 2019. As previously noted, this transmittal letter and your responses will be included in the hearing record. Your written response should be transmitted by e-mail in the Word document provided with this letter to Josh Krantz, Policy Analyst with the Committee, at josh.krantz@mail.house.gov. You do not need to send a paper copy of your responses to the Committee. Using the Word document provided for submitting your responses will also help maintain the proper format for incorporating your answers into the hearing record.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. If you need additional information or have other questions, please have your staff contact Mr. Krantz at (202) 225-5056.

Sincerely,

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman

Attachments

cc: Hon. Greg Walden, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Hon. Anna G. Eshoo, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Health

Hon. Michael C. Burgess, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health

Attachments—Additional Questions for the Record

**Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on
“Strengthening Health Care in the U.S. Territories for Today and Into the Future”
June 20, 2019**

Michal Rhymer-Browne

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D.

1. In FY 2018, federal spending for Medicaid in all five territories exceeded the annual Section 1108 allotment amount. I expect that in FY 2019, we’ll see an increase in federal spending over the annual Section 1108 allotment amount for all five territories since they’ll have access to a 100 percent federal matching rate for all or part of the fiscal year. Because no additional federal funding is available after December 2020, territories will generally need to finance any Medicaid spending over the annual Section 1108 allotment with local funds. My question for each of you is, if you only had the 1108 allotment funding, how short of funding would you all be?

In response to your letter dated August 27, 2019, I am providing the attached response to the question for the record submitted on behalf of the Honorable Michael C. Burgess. Based upon our current FY 2020 projections the Virgin Islands Medicaid Program is facing a Federal funding shortfall (“fiscal cliff”) totaling \$53,234,502.

As you can see in our response, even if the Congress were to enact enough Federal funding to support the projected expenditures subject to the Section 1108 allotment, the Virgin Island would be required to match those expenditures with Virgin Islands funds totaling \$40,891,296. In fact, we would have to come up with a total of \$46,464,588 in local funding to support our entire Medicaid program. The Virgin Islands does not have the local funding available to support this level of local Medicaid matching funds.

This lack of local funding, as we continue to rebuild our infrastructure and our economy since the two major hurricanes, is why I requested during the hearing that the Congress and the Administration consider providing the Virgin Islands at least 2 additional years of Federal funding at 100%. We are pleased to see that your Committee supports at least one additional year of 100% funding in H.R. 2328 as we continue the difficult work of hurricane recovery. We need both the Federal funding increase and increases in the Federal matching rates included in the Bill to provide us with a more equitable treatment under the Federal Medicaid program. Without this The Virgin Islands faces the devastating impacts outlined in my testimony before

your Committee.

Again, thank you and your Committee for the continued support of the Territories and we look forward to working with you to enact legislation which will ensure the continued ability of the Virgin Islands to provide the much needed health care services for our population through our Medicaid Program.

If you have any further questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (340)-690-0299