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January 14, 2021

The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
U.S. House of Representatives
2267 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Sablan:

On behalf of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), I am writing in support of the Insular Area Medicaid Parity Act, which seeks to repeal language in section 1108 of the Social Security Act and sunset limitations on Medicaid funding for Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa beginning in FY21. We are grateful for your continued leadership in advancing the needs of residents in the Northern Mariana Island and other U.S. territories.

As the organization representing both state and territorial health officials, the disparity in Medicaid financing for the territories is of great concern. While ASTHO is grateful for the extension of Medicaid funding for FY20 and FY21 in the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, and later increased funding through the Family First Coronavirus Response Act, it is imperative that Congress provide a permanent solution to Medicaid financing for the U.S. territories because enhanced Medicaid funding and increased federal medical assistance percentage rates expire after Sept. 30, 2021, and the current public health emergency, respectively.

Indeed, providing reliable and sustainable funding for U.S. territories is important and essential to building public health systems for residents to utilize within their communities without having to seek care off-island or in other jurisdictions. U.S. territories should not have to rely on supplemental, temporary funding to provide quality healthcare to their residents. Prioritizing this legislation in the 117th session of Congress supports our vision of advancing health equity and optimal health for all.

We look forward to working with you to address this important priority for U.S. territories. Please contact Jeffrey Ekoma, director, federal government affairs, ASTHO (jekoma@astho.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Michael Fraser, PhD, MS, CAE, FCPP
Chief Executive Officer
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials