

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

Friday, May 1, 2020

Governor Gretchen Whitmer  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

The ongoing COVID-19 emergency places unique challenges on the healthcare providers in Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Under the current realities, we must not forget the needs of rural and remote providers as the state continues its response to the pandemic.

Even before the onset of this crisis, many healthcare providers in Northern Michigan and the U.P. were operating on shoe-string budgets. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent cancellation of elective procedures and non-urgent clinical visits, our hospitals and health centers have been forced into a financial crisis. Many providers have reported that they only have days of operational funds left – jeopardizing their ability to maintain critical health services during this ongoing outbreak. Additionally, providers throughout Northern Michigan and the U.P. have experienced severe shortages in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and limited access to testing for COVID-19, especially rapid diagnostic test kits.

To date, Northern Michigan and the U.P. have not seen the widespread infection rates compared to areas in lower Michigan, in part due to successful social distancing and the rural and remote nature of our communities. However, hospitals and health centers throughout the region continue to lose funds while most of their procedures and services remain on hold indefinitely. I have also heard from constituents who are facing increased uncertainty as treatments like regular cancer screenings have been halted. Changes must be made to protect the health of those in Michigan's First District and ensure the financial wellbeing of our healthcare providers.

I therefore request that the state work with healthcare providers to create a plan to allow for non-emergency medical services and treatments. By working with local providers and ensuring necessary precautions are taken, a balance can be found between minimizing the risk of COVID-19 and addressing the healthcare needs of Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

Precautions must also be in place to ensure providers in the First District have adequate access to PPE should they see a sudden increase in patients as statewide restrictions begin to lift. I additionally request the state increase availability of rapid diagnostic tests to providers in rural

and remote areas – especially so they may be used for the healthcare professionals and first responders that are on the front lines of this crisis.

Healthcare providers in Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula are facing unique challenges and limitations that, if not addressed, threaten the health and livelihoods of our citizens. Thank you for your work to protect the health of Michiganders in Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. My entire staff and I stand ready to assist you in these efforts in any way we can. I am standing-by and ready to discuss this urgent situation at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Bergman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress