

United States Senate

September 20, 2022

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Criswell,

We write to urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to uphold its commitment to a swift reimbursement process for emergency protective measures taken by schools and hospitals to combat COVID-19.

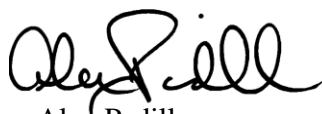
According to the California Hospital Association, FEMA has more than \$532 million in outstanding reimbursements for not-for-profit and governmental hospitals in California alone. Almost a third of these reimbursements are for expenses incurred before 2022. Another example is the Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest school district in California, which is still waiting on over \$7 million in FEMA reimbursements from 2020 and \$200 million in additional FEMA reimbursement requests for 2022.

Both hospitals and schools have been on the front lines of the pandemic since day one. School districts, which have continued to find innovative solutions to safely educate our nation's children, have struggled to receive timely reimbursements for the rising costs and prevention measures associated with COVID-19. Hospitals, which continue to sit at the forefront of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic with nearly 400 Americans still dying each day, are also experiencing significant hurdles to receiving overdue reimbursements.

While we appreciate the steps that FEMA has taken to try to improve the reimbursement process, the continued delays are undermining hospitals' capacity to protect frontline workers and build the infrastructure necessary to combat our nation's public health crises while also hindering school budgets and their ability to safely educate the next generation. Under President Biden's COVID-19 Public Health Major Disaster Declaration, FEMA is authorized to provide assistance for emergency protective measures. These reimbursements have been critical in ensuring that hospitals and schools can do everything from providing critical personal protective equipment for employees and installing air filters to hiring additional staff. However, chronic delays in dispersing this funding has meant that hospitals and schools are not receiving the resources they need to adequately address new variants and future waves of COVID-19.

We urge you to expeditiously disperse reimbursements to government and not-for-profit hospitals and eligible school districts, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Alex Padilla
United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator