

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

On February 21, Change Healthcare – a subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group that handles as many as one of every three patient records in the country – suffered a crippling cyberattack that has left our health care system “paralyzed.”<sup>1</sup> Hospitals and health care providers in Connecticut are urgently concerned about the impact the attack has had on a number of critical systems for care delivery and hospital and physician practice operations, including eligibility verification, notice of admission, prior authorization/concurrent review, medical coding, claims and reimbursement processing, case management, imaging clinical decision support, and remote patient monitoring.

While providers are working overtime to ensure patient care does not suffer, laboriously resorting to paper records and manual communications, they have reported serious cash flow issues resulting from an inability to bill for reimbursement for services rendered. Some independent physician practices in Connecticut have already reported laying off staff as a result. We are encouraged by the steps the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has already taken to address these financial concerns and provide greater administrative flexibility and encourage you to continue working with providers to safeguard patients and protect the financial solvency of impacted health care providers.<sup>2</sup> It is critical that Medicare advance payment requests for hospitals, physician practices, and other providers are expeditiously reviewed and that all payers, including private insurers, provide advance payments while billing issues are resolved and offer flexibility regarding procedural requirements, such as filing requirements for claims, timelines for appeals, and other policies that providers are unable to adhere to because of the current situation.

Further, we call on you to use all powers at your disposal to hold UHG responsible for this significant breach and guarantee the company offers accessible, robust financial assistance and frequent, transparent communication. While we appreciate your March 10 letter<sup>3</sup> to UHG

---

<sup>1</sup> Reed Abelson and Julie Creswell, *Cyberattack Paralyzes the Largest U.S. Health Care Payment System*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 5, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/05/health/cyberattack-healthcare-cash.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Press Release, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS Statement Regarding the Cyberattack on Change Healthcare (Mar. 5, 2024), <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/03/05/hhs-statement-regarding-the-cyberattack-on-change-healthcare.html>.

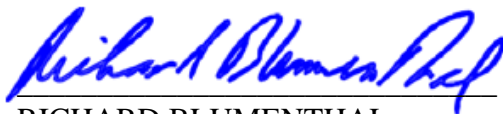
<sup>3</sup> Press Release, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Letter to Health Care Leaders on Cyberattack on Change Healthcare (Mar. 10, 2024), <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/03/10/letter-to-health-care-leaders-on-cyberattack-on-change->

and other payers outlining HHS' expectations going forward, we are deeply concerned that UHG's much touted Temporary Financial Assistance Program for providers is woefully inadequate and that other private payers are imposing stringent requirements on advance payment that put them out of reach. The American Hospital Association has written to UHG stating that the assistance program "is not even a band-aid," noting that only "an exceedingly small number of hospitals and health systems" are eligible and the terms of agreement are "shockingly onerous."<sup>4</sup> In Connecticut, we know of only one hospital that has received a limited benefit from the program and are aware that others have either faced significant roadblocks in even accessing the program, not been found eligible for the program, or have determined that the program is not worth pursuing due to its limited efficacy.

Increased pressure from HHS, providers, and the public has led UHG to allegedly shift from a loan program to advance payments,<sup>5</sup> but UHG's history shows an unwillingness to provide robust, easy to access, and needed relief. Further, despite the change to the program being made late last week, providers in our state have yet to report any meaningful relief in a situation where every minute counts. We urge you to hold UHG accountable and ensure that UHG's response meets the moment.

Facing possibly the most significant cyberattack on the U.S. health care system in history, emergency funding and administrative flexibility must be a priority for hospitals and health care providers as they seek to weather this storm while continuing to provide care to their patients. We appreciate the steps HHS has already taken and look forward to continuing working together to protect Connecticut patients, hospitals, and health care providers. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

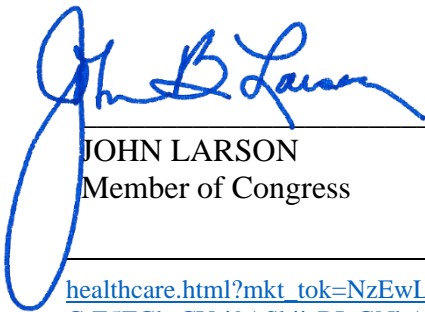
Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate



JOHN LARSON  
Member of Congress

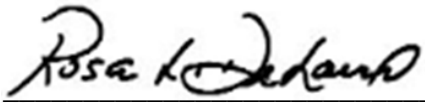


JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress

[healthcare.html?mkt\\_tok=NzEwLVpMTC02NTEAAAGRzNB08qQGLZouNd8QW4d8BIRQZA12g07ChK4QTqjICrE5FGh-CV-i9ASbiisBizGNhA2LvMeaA2\\_GU6LqApdFfmO0wWle8bBii-VKjXSG08JonA](https://www.healthcare.html?mkt_tok=NzEwLVpMTC02NTEAAAGRzNB08qQGLZouNd8QW4d8BIRQZA12g07ChK4QTqjICrE5FGh-CV-i9ASbiisBizGNhA2LvMeaA2_GU6LqApdFfmO0wWle8bBii-VKjXSG08JonA)

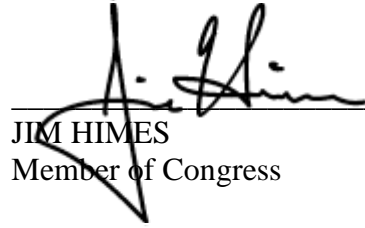
<sup>4</sup> Letter from Richard J. Pollack, President and CEO of American Hospital Association, to Dirk McMahon, President and COO of UnitedHealth Group (March 4, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Reed Abelson and Julie Creswell, With Cyberattack Fix Weeks Away, Health Providers Slam United, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 8, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/08/health/united-healthcare-cyberattack.html>.



---

ROSA DELAURO  
Member of Congress



---

JIM HIMES  
Member of Congress



---

JAHANA HAYES  
Member of Congress