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January 11, 2021

Ms. Elizabeth Thomas Smith
Secretary of the Department of Inspector General
Chair, CARES Act Steering Committee
323 Center Street, Suite 1200
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Extension of CARES Act funding for NWA Special Populations Testing and Contact Tracing Program

Dear Secretary Smith:

We are writing to request an extension of the funds granted to the Northwest Arkansas Council Health Transformation Division ("Division") for addressing COVID-19 in Special Populations.

As you are aware, the Division was originally awarded \$7,000,000 to establish a comprehensive testing, contact tracing and enhanced case management program to help address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the LatinX and Marshallese population in Northwest Arkansas. UAMS-NW and Community Clinic have led the regional efforts on behalf of the division and have established a program that incorporates the efforts of our regional health care providers, non-profit support community and is fully coordinated with the Arkansas Department of Health. Prior to the expiration of the original deadline, we received approval to expend \$500,000 of the remaining funds, which has allowed us to extend this program to date. In this letter, we request to expend the approximately \$3,600,000 remaining funds in the original allocation so that we can continue this successful program.

At the outset of COVID-19 in Northwest Arkansas, the number of cases among Latinx and Marshallese residents were on a steady increase. From March through July 2020 the cases in these communities were ~400% higher than the general population. The CARES Act funding has allowed the Division's special populations program to help drive down infection rates in the Latinx and Marshallese communities. In July, 45% of all adult COVID-19 cases (cumulative proportion) in NWA were Latinx, and 19% (cumulative proportion) were Marshallese. As of January 1, the cumulative proportion was, 30.7% among Latinx and 7.7% among Marshallese, respectively.

As you know, with the continued surge in COVID-19 cases, there is still much work to do. We are making excellent progress and we urge you to consider extending this important program.

Please let us know if you require additional details about the program or this request.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nelson Peacock', written in a cursive style.

Nelson Peacock
CEO Northwest Arkansas Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pearl Anna Mcelfish', written in a cursive style.

Pearl Anna Mcelfish, Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor Northwest Arkansas Region
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Fayetteville, AR