



*A driving force for health equity*

*Submitted via electronic mail*

March 3, 2024

Honorable Joseph Biden  
President  
White House  
Washington D.C.

*Re: Protecting Community-Based Providers and Critical Access Hospitals in Underserved and Rural Communities from impact of cyberattack on Change Health Care*

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of OCHIN, I am urging the Administration to take immediate steps to mitigate the adverse impact of the cybersecurity attack that has compromised the operations of Change Healthcare and resulted in disruptions in claims processing, eligibility checks, and other critical operational processes that ultimately undermine clinical care. OCHIN is a **national nonprofit health information technology and research network** that serves nearly 2,000 community health care sites with 25,000 providers in 40 states, reaching more than 8 million patients in underserved and rural communities. For over two decades, OCHIN has provided technology solutions, informatics, evidence-based research, workforce development and training as well as policy insights for federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, local public health agencies, critical access hospitals and other community providers.

Our members have been impacted by this cyberattack indirectly as the ripple effect has been significant due to Change Healthcare's outsized market footprint. Even prior to the cyber-attack, safety-net providers have been experiencing financial stress as the Medicaid unwinding has directly impacted their financial sustainability as more of their patients are under- or uninsured and fewer are covered under Medicaid. Any delays in payment for insured patients and increases in administrative burdens (by reverting to paper claims, for example), has an outsized impact on their ability to keep their doors open. Our members do not have the financial margins nor the capital reserves of large health systems or large private practices. The latter have already communicated the extreme financial and practice strain they are experiencing which is exponentially more serious among safety net providers. We are also concerned about privacy breaches for both patients, clinicians, and operational staff.

We urge the Administration to direct the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to exercise all existing flexibilities to accelerate payments, identify funding to keep doors open for safety net providers, and work with state Medicaid agencies to offer similar support (accelerated Medicaid payments) and funding to support cyber readiness and resiliency. Please contact me at **[stollj@ochin.org](mailto:stollj@ochin.org)** if we can provide any additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Stoll  
Chief External Affairs Officer

cc:

Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate

Honorable Mitch McConnell, Republican Leader, U.S. Senate

Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Hakeem Jefferies, House Democratic Leader, U.S. House of Representatives