

One-Pager/Fact Sheet



**ALEX PADILLA**

U.S. SENATOR *for* CALIFORNIA

**The Pediatric Access to Critical Health Care (PATCH) Act**

Senator Padilla invites colleagues to be original cosponsors on the Pediatric Access to Critical Health Care (PATCH) Act to provide crucial funding to support increasing pediatric health care capacity. The legislation would provide \$6 billion over 10 years in dedicated funding for national pediatric preparedness response investments. Matching requirements supporting accountability and contributions from the private sector will double the impact of this federal investment. With a 50% matching program, a bill providing \$6 billion of support creates \$12 billion of total investment in increasing pediatric health care capacity for all children across all regions of the country.

Children's hospitals around the country are currently experiencing a surge in caseload, straining the pediatric health care capacity. Driving factors include:

- A significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in children;
- A national mental health crisis that has intensified in the last 18 months resulting in children with severe challenges presenting at children's hospitals;
- An early onset to the annual fall/winter of RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) cycle. Infection rates and severity continue to rise at least through the autumn months;
- The escalating crisis has been covered extensively in national media.

**The PATCH Act:**

- Provides \$6 billion over 10 years (\$600 million per year) for pediatric capacity building and preparedness response including:
  - More flexible critical care capacity.
  - Strengthening the pediatric health care workforce.
  - Updating and modernizing telehealth technology and cybersecurity.
- Hospitals must match the funding received.
- Hospitals where 60% of patients are covered by Medicaid will be prioritized in grant funding.

With pediatric volumes already at or nearing capacity and the school season expected to increase demand, there may not be sufficient bed capacity or expert staff to care for children and families in need. This bill would deliver desperately needed support to build pediatric health care capacity, including among high Medicaid providers. **This bill is supported by the Children's Hospital Association.**