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United States Senate

December 5, 2023

Carole Johnson
Administrator
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

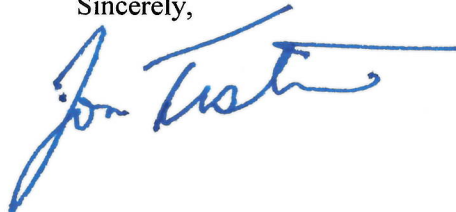
Dear Administrator Johnson:

I urge the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to immediately address an error that resulted in significant loss of resources for a critical care provider in rural Montana. Despite outreach from both Billings Clinic and my office, your agency has neither acknowledged this failure nor provided options to rectify this loss of funding.

Billings Clinic Townsend Health Systems is a Critical Access Hospital serving a community of 2,000 Montanans that was denied the final round of resources from the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) due to an overseas contractor mistaking the applicant for a billing company, an ineligible entity to receive funds, due to their name "Billings Clinic". HRSA contractor, Optum, committed a \$234,253.70 error when it denied Billing Clinic's application and attempt to enroll in an Optum Pay ACH Clearing House on the mistaken belief that they were a billing clinic. While the reviewer ultimately recognized the error, the PRF closed before the funds could be received.

Rural communities already face tremendous barriers to health care and it is deeply concerning that HRSA would be so careless in assisting a critical provider in Montana's health care delivery system. HRSA's mission is to improve health outcomes and health equity, yet this error may lead to less access to care in a rural community and that is utterly unacceptable. I request your immediate attention to this matter and stand ready to work with you.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator

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