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Barbara J. Thomas
Executive Director

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Katie Porter
U.S. House of Representatives, CA-45
1117 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Community Project Funding/Support for Medical Assistant Academy Program

Dear Representative Porter:

As Congress is considering Community Project Funding opportunities, I write to you today on behalf of the South Orange County Economic Coalition (Coalition) to urge you to prioritize Providence's Medical Assistant Academy Program in Mission Viejo as one of your recommended projects. While only a limited number of projects will ultimately receive funding, I firmly believe that medical assistant academy program will strengthen the community we both proudly serve.

As South Orange County's leading voice of business, the South Orange County Economic Coalition is the driving force of advocating for a strong local economy. We focus on four key areas: Advocacy, Education, Representation and Progress for South Orange County issues, initiatives and projects. Representing hundreds of employees, we are an alliance of businesses, community thought-leaders and stakeholders committed to enhancing the region's economic vitality and protecting its exceptional quality of life.

The Coalition has certainly seen how its members and the residents and businesses of south Orange County have struggled over the past year. With the COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated economic and school shutdowns, our communities have faced unprecedented challenges.

One of the bright spots has been Providence Mission Hospital. The frontline heroes of Providence Mission Hospital and other health facilities throughout Orange County have been caring for our community since the beginning of the pandemic. Now, they're protecting our community from future infections through the smooth roll out of vaccinations, so that we may have a safer, healthier tomorrow.

We can further support our health system and the community by providing funding to support the Medical Assistant Academy Program. Nationwide, employment of medical assistants (MAs) is projected to grow 23 percent over the next decade; far outpacing the average occupation growth of about 5 percent. This rapid growth is fueled by the aging Baby Boomer generation, accelerating both the retirement of current medical assistants and the need for long-term care. This funding would enable Providence to pilot an immediate expansion of its effective Medical Assistant Certificate Program. Providence can build clinical capacity to serve more patients in Orange County.

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Thank you for your leadership and service. I look forward to continuing our work together, and collaborating with representatives at all levels of government, to support our constituents and strengthen our community. I greatly appreciate your consideration and support for Providence's Medical Assistant Academy Program in Mission Viejo and the benefits to our constituents in south Orange County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara J. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara J. Thomas

Executive Director

South Orange County Economic Coalition