

June 10, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

The undersigned national organizations, representing health care consumers and patients, providers, labor, civil rights groups, and other stakeholders, write to express our support for legislation that recently passed the House of Representatives, H.R. 986 and H.R. 987, which contain provisions to improve health coverage and access, and undo administrative sabotage. We urge the Senate to swiftly consider these bills, and also urge the House and Senate to pass legislation that further improves affordability by reducing insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs in the individual and small group markets, both for low-income families and those that are not eligible for tax credits.

The Senate Should Swiftly Consider House-Passed Legislation

H.R. 987, the Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act, which passed the House last week with bipartisan support, and H.R. 986, the Protecting Americans with Preexisting Conditions Act, are made up of several proposals that would improve health coverage for families, and protect people with pre-existing conditions by reversing Trump Administration actions that fundamentally undermine the individual and small group markets.

The American public has urged Congress to improve health care. In fact, health care was the #1 issue for voters in the 2018 election. Now is the time for the Senate to respond to the call of constituents and pass efforts to help families afford their health care and obtain guaranteed access to comprehensive coverage. Specifically, we write to express our support of provisions that:

- Rescind the Trump Administration rule that has allowed junk short-term plans to flourish;
- Provide \$100 million annually for the federal marketplace Navigator program and reinstate standards to ensure the quality of the program. These efforts restore cutbacks to the program made by the Trump administration;
- Restore outreach and marketing funding to ensure consumers are informed about their options for affordable health care, which has been slashed by the Trump Administration;
- Provide states funding to establish their own marketplaces;
- Undo the Trump Administration's harmful guidance on 1332 waivers, which would allow states to circumvent important consumer protections.

Congress Should Take Further Action to Improve Affordability

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) greatly improved the U.S. health insurance system, but our country's work is not complete. Despite the ACA's gains, health insurance and health care remain unaffordable for many families. We urge Congress to swiftly adopt legislation that further helps families afford comprehensive coverage through the enhancement of premium tax credits (PTCs). There is already legislation introduced in the House, H.R. 1868, that would substantially lower costs for consumers with incomes at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) by increasing the amount of financial assistance provided by PTCs. The legislation also helps many with incomes above that threshold by repealing the artificial income cap on PTC eligibility. Another piece of legislation, H.R. 1425 would provide federal funding for states to establish their own reinsurance programs to lower health care premiums or use the funds to provide financial assistance to reduce out-of-pocket costs including premiums for individuals enrolled in qualified health plans.

We strongly recommend H.R. 1868 and H.R. 1425 are paired to ensure that resources are targeted to those who experience the greatest need and insurance is more affordable for everyone. We urge Congress to consider these proposals without delay.

We look forward to working with you on further efforts to lower consumer health care costs and expand health care access, value, and equity.

Sincerely,

Families USA
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Work
American Association on Health & Disability
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Medical Student Association
American Muslim Health Professionals
American Public Health Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Autism Society of America
Caring Across Generations
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for American Progress
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Catalyst
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
First Focus Campaign for Children
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
GO2Foundation for Lung Cancer
HIV Medicine Association

International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of
America (UAW)
Islamic Society of North America
MomsRising
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Health Law Program
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Protect Our Care
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
The AIDS Institute
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Union for Reform Judaism
Voices for Progress

Cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee
The Honorable Greg Walden, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee
The Honorable Richard Neal, Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Chair, House Education and Labor Committee
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, House Education and Labor Committee
The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chair, Senate HELP Committee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee