



THE PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDICAID

January 24, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

On behalf of the Partnership for Medicaid (Partnership), thank you for your continued commitment to the Medicaid program. Our member organizations are eager to work with you to build upon efforts to sustain and strengthen Medicaid in 2022.

The Partnership – a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition made up of organizations representing clinicians, health care providers, safety net plans, and counties – appreciates initiatives from Congress throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to bolster the Medicaid program and support the health care safety net. Your continued attention has not only allowed the program to meet the needs of millions of Americans during a public health crisis but has also reinforced the importance of investing in Medicaid now to protect and sustain its promise for the future.

As Congress commences a new year, the Partnership urges lawmakers to prioritize policy proposals to strengthen Medicaid and ensure its stability for underrepresented populations who rely on this critical program. Congress should seek to pass legislation that would:

- create a predictable, evidence-informed wind down of the enhanced federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) and continuous coverage provisions included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act that provides sufficient guardrails to protect beneficiaries while also reflecting the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- close the Medicaid coverage gap for Americans residing in states that have yet to expand Medicaid and still lack access to health insurance;
- invest in and improve access to Medicaid home- and community-based services (HCBS) and mental health services, including for children, while strengthening the direct care workforce, funding these efforts to the maximum level possible;
- permanently ensure that all pregnant individuals on Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) retain their health coverage during the critical first year postpartum;
- provide one year of continuous eligibility for children covered by Medicaid and CHIP;

- increase access to and improve community mental health services by expanding the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Demonstration Program to allow all states to participate and address the barriers in Medicaid that make mental health integration in pediatric primary care more challenging;
- provide Medicaid coverage to eligible, justice-involved individuals 30 days prior to release;
- create a permanent and sustainable Medicaid financing solution for Puerto Rico and other territories;
- extend the 100 percent FMAP for Urban Indian Organizations and Native Hawaiian Health Systems for another two years;
- make permanent Medicaid's Money Follows the Person program and the Protection Against Spousal Impoverishment;
- permanently authorize CHIP; and
- raise Medicaid payment levels, as undervaluing Medicaid payments, and consequently the patients Medicaid serves, perpetuates systemic barriers to health and health care and exacerbates health disparities.

Taken together, these proposed improvements to Medicaid and CHIP represent a once in a generation opportunity to stabilize and expand access to health care and long-term services and supports for millions of low-income Americans, from older adults, people with disabilities, children, pregnant and postpartum individuals, and their families, and many more. Many of these proposals mirror bipartisan legislation introduced in the 117th Congress, including:

- the Helping MOMS Act (H.R.3345) that would provide Medicaid coverage one year postpartum;
- the Stabilize Medicaid and CHIP Coverage Act (H.R. 1738) that would offer 12 months continuous eligibility in Medicaid;
- the Medicaid Reentry Act (S. 285 and H.R. 955) that would provide Medicaid coverage to eligible incarcerated individuals 30 days before returning to the community; and
- the Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Act (S. 2069 and H.R. 4323) that would expand the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Demonstration Program.

Furthermore, for Medicaid issues legislatively tied to the public health emergency, we urge Congress to proceed with caution when applying imminent, static sunsets to policies stakeholders rely upon to help mitigate COVID-19's burden. For example, the House-passed version of the Build Back Better Act (which was developed before the current omicron variant surge) would unwind the enhanced FMAP and continuous coverage provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act beginning in April. This policy, without date changes, would present challenges to the Medicaid community were it to become law with minimal lead time, during the omicron variant surge, and amid the uncertainty of new surges in the future. We look forward to working with Congress to help balance the need for predictability and certainty for policies Congress intended to be temporary with the ongoing, and oft changing, nature of this pandemic.

Our coalition encourages lawmakers to advance these important Medicaid policies through any legislative pathway this year. We remain grateful for your leadership and commitment to the

Medicaid program and the populations it serves. If you have questions or seek any additional information, please contact Jonathan Westin at the Jewish Federations of North America, First Co-Chair of the Partnership for Medicaid at Jonathan.Westin@jewishfederations.org.

We look forward to working with you to advance these and other policies to strengthen the Medicaid program this year.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Education Association
American Network of Community Options & Resources (ANCOR)
America's Essential Hospitals
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Children's Hospital Association
Easterseals
The Jewish Federations of North America
Medicaid Health Plans of America
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Counties
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Rural Health Clinics
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Rural Health Association

CC: The Honorable Ron Wyden, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Mike Crapo, Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Frank Pallone Jr., Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee