



May 23, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch:

On behalf of the Partnership for Medicaid – a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition of health care providers, safety net health plans, counties and labor – the undersigned organizations thank you for the opportunity to provide stakeholder feedback on Senate health care efforts. We would like to focus our comments on the Medicaid program, which plays a vital role in delivering necessary health care and other related services and supports to more than 70 million low-income children, pregnant women, individuals, seniors, people with disabilities and the medically complex in our country. We urge the Senate to maintain the current structure of the Medicaid program and the federal financial commitment with the states to care for our nation’s most vulnerable, low-income individuals.

Medicaid serves as a lifeline of support for millions of Americans who depend on Congress to ensure and protect their continued access to care and coverage. Policies designed to meet fiscal objectives do not strengthen the Medicaid program, nor do they guarantee access to care. We are united in our concern over policy proposals that represent a significant shift in the cost of the Medicaid program to states, local governments, providers and beneficiaries. We urge the Senate to ensure that future financing of Medicaid-covered services is sufficient to secure timely access to high quality, necessary care for Medicaid enrollees. The Partnership believes that any changes to the Medicaid program must align with our core principles, which are intended to ensure a strong safety net program in place for our most vulnerable citizens.

Medicaid plays an important role in providing access to necessary health services that include maternity care, pediatric services, primary and dental care, and long-term services and supports. The program also covers 48 percent of all U.S. births and helps reduce unemployment and homelessness by stabilizing individuals’ health.¹ Additionally, Medicaid enables states the flexibility to innovate and

¹ A. R. Markus, E. Andres, K. D. West, N. Garro and C. Pellegrini, “Medicaid covered births, 2008 through 2010, in the context of the implementation of health reform,” *Women’s Health Issues* 23, no. 5 (2013): 273-280.

design the program to fit their state's needs; adequate funding must be provided to ensure states meet the needs of their most vulnerable populations.

The Partnership encourages members of Congress to focus on ways to enhance and preserve the Medicaid program. In particular, the Partnership urges Congress to consider proposals that develop a national Medicaid quality data reporting system. A uniform, state-level reporting mechanism for the Medicaid program would ensure program efficiency and would provide a national perspective that could create a pathway for innovation. The Partnership also supports the improvement of program eligibility pathways.

Finally, your request for feedback notes a desire for an open process. The Partnership strongly urges you to take advantage of the Senate's regular order by bringing any health care bills through the Finance Committee for open, bipartisan committee hearings and a mark-up. This process is the best way to ensure that all stakeholders are able to provide meaningful feedback.

As Congress looks to reform the U.S. health system, the members of the Partnership urge congressional leaders to take the time needed to develop and enact effective policies that ensure coverage and access to affordable care for all Americans.

Best Regards,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
American Health Care Association
America's Essential Hospitals
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Children's Hospital Association
Easterseals
Jewish Federations of North America
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Counties
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Rural Health Clinics
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Rural Health Association