



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

February 22, 2023

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization representing more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, service providers and organizations, I would like to extend our best wishes to you and express the commitment of CHA to work with you during the 118th Congress. As representatives of front-line health care providers in all 50 states and with over 100 years of service, the CHA represents the largest not-for profit provider of health care service in the nation and a critical aspect of our nation's health care system.

As you begin the work of the 118th Congress, I would like to share with you CHA's Vision for Health Care in the U.S. and the advocacy priorities of the Catholic health ministry. As stated in our Vision, CHA advocates a health care system that is available, accessible and affordable to everyone and is designed to create and sustain a strong, healthy national and global community. The U.S. health care system should support and promote the health and well-being of every community, including rural and urban underserved areas. We urge you to:

1) Provide access, coverage and affordability for everyone:

- Enhanced affordability, accessibility and quality of coverage for everyone, paying special attention to low-income and vulnerable individuals, disadvantaged communities and those in rural areas,
- Improved investment and effective financing to ensure access to care, workforce development, and the sustainability of the health care system,
- Innovative policy approaches for delivering care, including advanced payment models and telehealth options, to improve access and outcomes and reduce costs through integration, coordination, and prevention,
- Improved access to mental and behavioral health services, as well as substance use disorder treatment, to ensure coordinated and holistic care.

2) Ensure a strong safety net:

- Adequate reimbursement in the Medicare and Medicaid programs with rates that appropriately reflect the increased costs of delivering care,
- Efforts to improve access, care and quality outcomes in Medicare, Medicaid and other safety net programs that protect the health and well-being of seniors,
- Policies to assist health care providers, particularly disproportionate share hospitals, rural health and 340(b) hospitals, in delivering quality, compassionate care improve the health and well-being of communities and eliminate disparities,
- Policies to end racial and ethnic health disparities, promote culturally competent care and increase workforce diversity,

- Programs and services that address the social determinants of health, including housing, nutrition, education, employment and discrimination,
- Strengthening the public health system to enhance, support and protect our communities and prepare for public health emergencies,
- Addressing social justice issues to eliminate human trafficking, protect immigrants and their access to health care and promote environmental responsibility and sustainability as well as global health and development,
- Furthering our mission to care for vulnerable persons through community benefit programs, strengthening not-for-profit health care and protecting tax- exempt status.

3) Strengthen aging and chronic care services:

- Improved access to quality palliative care for those suffering the pain and stress of serious illness, as a core component of the health care system,
- Sustainable financing for long-term care facilities, workforce development and services
- Policies and regulatory relief to address a shrinking workforce and support quality care and services,
- Improved coordination of care and choices for elders and persons with disabilities to receive long-term care services in the most appropriate care setting, whether at home, in the community (such as PACE) or in a facility.

4) Protect life and ensure conscience protection:

- Encourage policies that promote and support health at all stages of life, from maternal pre- and post-natal care to compassionate end-of-life care,
- Preserve and strengthen existing provider conscience protections that allow us to provide care consistent with our faith,
- Advocate policies that acknowledge our religious, ethical and moral values.

CHA and the entire Catholic health ministry look forward to working with you over the next two years. Please feel free to reach out to any of our advocacy staff if you have any questions or concerns on issues impacting Catholic health care across our country. You can contact Lisa Smith, Vice President, Advocacy and Public Policy (Lsmith@chausa.org), or one of our Senior Directors of Government Relations, Lucas Swanepoel (Lswanepoel@chausa.org) or Paulo Pontemayor (ppontemayor@chausa.org).

Please be assured of my continued prayers and best wishes as you begin the important work of the American people during this Congress.

Sincerely,



Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO