



*A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care*

March 23, 2022

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

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 write to urge you to reinvigorate efforts to pass a reconciliation bill which invests in our nation's future and well-being.

Working as front-line providers during the pandemic, our members have provided compassionate, high-quality care to persons of all ages, races, faiths, and ethnic backgrounds with special attention to the poor and vulnerable. The reconciliation bill presents a historic opportunity to make substantial improvements to our nation's commitments to promoting life and human dignity by expanding access to affordable health care, protecting our environment, and strengthening the social safety net for those most in need. We urge you to renew your efforts to make these historic investments by:

**Ensuring important health coverage policies that expand access and affordability and address health equity.** The enhanced ACA subsidies have provided critical support for reducing the cost of health care for working families and have allowed record numbers of people to purchase affordable and quality health insurance for themselves and their families. Additionally, the Medicaid program has been a lifeline for millions during these last two years. We ask that the bill include these important provisions:

- Extend the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA) Marketplace premium and cost-sharing tax subsidies and income premium cap made under the *American Rescue Plan Act* (ARPA);
- Expand ACA Marketplace eligibility to close the "Medicaid Coverage Gap" for over two million uninsured, very low-income adults (those under 100% of the Federal Poverty Level) who live in the 12 Medicaid non-expansion states;
- Permanently extend and require states to provide Medicaid postpartum coverage for a full year;
- Permanently fund the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) while also requiring 12-month continuous eligibility for children in CHIP and Medicaid to prevent unnecessary coverage losses;
- Increase funding for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to ensure the elderly and those living with disabilities have the support they need, while at the same time supporting the caregiving workforce; and
- Address the affordability of prescription drugs for our patients.

**Supporting policies that aid our front-line providers and facilities.** Specifically, we urge you to fund programs and grants to increase the health care workforce; provide training programs that seek to promote diversity in health care professions; and ensure that our hospitals, long-term care facilities and health care organizations have the resources to hire and retain health care staff due to ongoing labor shortages.

As Catholic health care providers, climate change is a moral concern that demands prudent action to reduce our carbon footprint, protect human life and dignity and care for those most at risk from the negative health impacts of climate change and pollution. **The bill must also address climate change and promote initiatives to protect our environment.** We ask for the inclusion of policies that invest in clean energy and resilience to build upon the important work of our members in their communities.

**Lastly, we urge you to include policies that protect Medicaid beneficiaries, providers, and communities after the end of the public health emergency.** Specifically, please ensure that any eligibility redeterminations process conducted by states for Medicaid beneficiaries does not result in millions losing coverage; provide sustainable policies and financing for health care providers to address the rising costs of medical supplies and ongoing workforce staffing challenges; and continue regulatory flexibilities that have allowed our hospitals to deliver care past surges caused by the delta and omicron variants.

As Catholic health care providers, we are committed to reducing health disparities, promoting health equity, and ensuring that everyone in our nation has access to affordable health care. We urge you to renew your efforts to pass a historic reconciliation bill to reduce health care costs and expand access to affordable and accessible health care to low-income and working families in our nation. We thank you for your leadership on behalf of all the communities we are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,

  
Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM  
President and CEO