



June 5, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

The Partnership for Medicaid – a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition made up of organizations representing clinicians, health care providers, safety net health plans, counties, and labor – thanks the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for taking strong steps to address the nation’s health care needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a primary source of coverage for over 70 million individuals, the Medicaid program urgently requires relief to maintain its critical role during this public health crisis and beyond. We are once again calling on HHS to prioritize Medicaid and the wide array of providers and health professionals committed to serving the Medicaid program as you continue your critical work of providing relief funds to our nation’s health care workforce.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) created a Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF) to provide up to \$100 billion in funding for health care providers, including Medicaid providers. An additional \$75 billion was appropriated in the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act. To date, disbursements of these funds have prioritized providers serving Medicare patients and have largely excluded those serving the Medicaid population. We believe this approach to disbursement is inherently flawed and consider it unacceptable that more than two months after the CARES Act became law Medicaid providers still have not received equitable relief and therefore continue to face tremendous financial challenges. We echo concerns raised by Congressional health leaders in their June 3 [letter](#) to HHS on the lack of distribution of financial relief funds to Medicaid providers, who continue to face tremendous financial challenges.

The Partnership for Medicaid is again urging HHS to ensure that a proportional amount of the remaining PHSSEF funding, and any additional relief funding appropriated by Congress, is provided quickly to ALL Medicaid providers and health professionals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We further ask HHS to work closely with states to identify and approve innovative approaches for distributing other forms of financial relief to providers and health professionals.

In providing these funds to America’s health care safety net, we encourage HHS to rely on the systems it has already created for garnering provider attestation and distributing resources. We caution HHS against creating overly burdensome requirements for physicians and other health care professionals to meet in order to receive CARES Act funding. This is especially important for small practices that have already been forced to close, furlough or layoff staff, who simply do not have the



capacity or resources to check several boxes while continuing to provide high-quality care to patients.

We urge HHS to act swiftly to disburse relief funds to Medicaid providers and we thank you for your consideration. The Partnership for Medicaid looks forward to ongoing collaboration with HHS to preserve and strengthen the Medicaid program and support its crucial role as a strong safety net for vulnerable Americans. If you have questions on any of the priorities discussed in this letter, please contact Shelby Higgins at the American Academy of Family Physicians, First Co-Chair of the Partnership for Medicaid, at shiggins@aafp.org or partnershipformedicaid@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Education Association
America's Essential Hospitals
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Catholic Health Association of the United States
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: Seema Verma, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Thomas J. Engels, Administrator, HRSA
Calder Lynch, Deputy Administrator and Director, Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services
Lee Stevens, Senior Policy Advisory, Office of the Secretary, IEA
Gary Beck, Advisor for External Affairs, Office of the Secretary, IEA
Erin Reilly, External Affairs Specialist, Office of the Secretary, IEA
Michael Baker, Policy Advisor, Office of the Secretary, IEA
Caryn Marks, Office of the Secretary, IEA