



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

June 26, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I would like to express our support for H.R. 1425, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Enhancement Act* (PPACEA), and urge you to vote for this legislation when it comes to the floor. This bill provides several necessary additions and improvements to the landmark Affordable Care Act (ACA) to ensure that accessible and affordable care is available for all those who need it in our country.

The Catholic Health Association's *Vision for U.S. Health Care* calls for health care to be available and accessible to everyone, paying special attention to poor and vulnerable individuals. Guided by Catholic social teaching, we recognize the right to have access to health care based on the inherent dignity of each individual. With the covid-19 pandemic negatively affecting all segments of our society and exacerbating racial and ethnic health disparities, now is the time to expand coverage to protect more individuals and their families.

CHA has long worked for policies to make comprehensive health care affordable and accessible to everyone. Over the last ten years we have seen how the Affordable Care Act has benefited the communities we serve, and remain strongly committed to ensuring that coverage under the ACA is available, affordable, stable and meaningful. We have previously supported many of the numerous improvements outlined in the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Enhancement Act*, including:

- Enhancing affordability, accessibility and quality of coverage for all, through the increased eligibility and generosity of Marketplace subsidies;
- Addressing what is known as the "family glitch" to allow and assist three to six million more Americans to purchase health insurance coverage in the Marketplace, thereby expanding the risk pool and increasing stability;
- Improving and expanding the Medicaid program to provide coverage for more beneficiaries and vulnerable communities like American Indians, Alaska Natives and Compact of Free Association migrants, while also ensuring for a year of continuous eligibility to help keep beneficiaries enrolled and including a primary care payment bump—mirrored after a similar ACA provision—to help improve access to primary care providers;
- Committing to the health and well-being of mothers, infants and children by providing for 12 months of coverage for postpartum women eligible for Medicaid based on their pregnancy and permanently authorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program;
- Ensuring continued investment in consumer information and outreach efforts to create a


sustainable risk pool, which raises awareness about coverage options and removes barriers to enrollment;

- Providing funds and incentives to states for expansion of Medicaid, promoting the use of state-based Marketplaces, funding reinsurance programs, reducing out-of-pocket costs for consumers, and encouraging higher enrollment in the individual and small group market;
- Strengthening the ACA by preventing the implementation of short-term, limited-duration plans and Section 1332 guidance, which would negatively affect those with pre-existing conditions; and
- Lowering the cost of prescription drugs through the inclusion of several provisions from H.R. 3, the *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*.

As the Affordable Care Act celebrates a decade of being the law of the land, CHA hopes that Congress will continue to explore ways to expand and strengthen its provisions and ensure that our nation's most vulnerable have access to quality, affordable and justly financed health care. We stand ready to work with all members of Congress to improve the availability, coverage and quality of our health care system for those who need our help and support.

We strongly urge you to vote for this important legislation-- please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Mary Haddad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO