



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

October 22, 2019

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

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 am writing to express our strong support for several bills the committee is marking up today. These pieces of legislation align with our longstanding advocacy goals and our overall vision for U.S. health care founded on the core values of the Catholic health ministry.

As the healing ministry of the Catholic Church, CHA's utmost priority is improving access to health care for everyone in our nation, particularly for those who have no access at all and those who still do not have access to the full spectrum of the care they need. We believe the bills being considered will take several important steps toward that goal with measures to lower the costs of prescription drugs, enhance our health care workforce and strengthen beneficiaries' access to vital services in the Medicare program.

We urge committee members to support the following bills:

- H.R. 3398, the *Pathways to Health Careers Act of 2019* introduced by Congressman Davis (D-IL), which includes legislation that extends the current Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) demonstration grants and aims to increase the pipeline of the health care workforce, including in rural areas and the territories.
- H.R. 3, the *Lower Drug Costs Act Now of 2019* introduced by Congressman Pallone (D-NJ), Congressman Neal (D-MA) and Congressman Scott (D-VA), which includes proposals to lower the costs of prescription drugs through Medicare negotiation authority by enabling the federal government to leverage its buying power to lower prices while also including new consumer protections such as an out-of-pocket maximum for seniors in Medicare Part D.
- H.R. 4650, the *Medicare Dental Act of 2019* introduced by Congresswoman Kelly (D-IL), which would add a dental benefit to Medicare Part B providing preventive dental care, routine dental treatments and dentures.
- H.R. 4665, the *Medicare Vision Act of 2019* introduced by Congresswoman Schrier (D-WA), which would add a vision benefit to Medicare Part B.
- H.R. 4618, the *Medicare Hearing Act of 2019* introduced by Congresswoman McBath (D-GA), which would add a hearing benefit to Part B including coverage for hearing aids.

These bills aim to address the health care workforce shortage, strive to lower prescription drug costs for seniors and our most vulnerable and expand essential health care services for Medicare beneficiaries through enhancements to the Part B program. We urge bipartisan support for these pieces of legislation as they help to build a more just and equitable health care system and foster the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our support these important bills, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO

CC: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee