



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

November 18, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

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, service providers and organizations, I am writing to urge Congress to come together quickly in a bipartisan manner to address the enormous challenges facing the country. As you chart the course of the remaining weeks of the 116th Congress in crafting a legislative package to address the public health and economic crises in the country, we hope that you provide security and hope to people in need.

Throughout this year our members have shown their courageous compassion in aiding the patients, families and communities affected by coronavirus. We are inspired by their tireless efforts at the forefront of responding to the pandemic. The currently rising infections and deaths across the country highlight the continued need for unified and bold action from Congress and the federal government. As Congress crafts the next supplemental legislative package, we urge you to include the following targeted measures.

Covid-19 Relief

The record-breaking surge in new infections has strained the capacity of hospitals including many of our members. They require continued financial assistance and protection for front-line health workers. At the same time, individuals and communities suffering from coronavirus also need support, including the expansion of health coverage during the pandemic and additional assistance for social safety net programs. Namely, we ask that a year-end package include these vital components:

- Provide additional financial resources for testing, personal protective equipment (PPE), and the Provider Relief Fund to support providers and access to care as the virus surges again across the country;
- Extend the Public Health Emergency telehealth flexibilities for two years to ensure greater outreach and care to vulnerable groups, especially minority and rural

- communities;
- Protect and expand health care coverage and access for the most vulnerable by increasing federal Medicaid funding to states—an additional federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) increase of at least 12% and continuous coverage for beneficiaries to protect vulnerable individuals, children and families;
- Support access to housing by increasing funding for emergency rental assistance, 202 housing programs and by enacting a temporary moratorium on evictions and foreclosures;
- Increase the benefits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Extend the moratorium on Medicare Sequestration and Medicaid DSH Cuts

As the nation's hospitals, long-term care facilities and providers continue efforts to contain the pandemic, our members are also subjected to the looming automatic 2% cuts ("sequestration") in the Medicare program and \$4 billion cuts in the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program. We ask that Congress extend the moratorium on these cuts through the duration of the public health emergency and at least until the end of 2021 to ensure providers have the resources to continue to care for patients and communities during this pandemic.

Expand Coverage for Prenatal and Post-Partum Maternal Care

CHA supports promoting access to prenatal and postpartum care by expanding Medicaid coverage for one year postpartum, expanding presumptive eligibility for pregnant women and expanding maternal home visitation programs to improve the health and wellbeing of mothers and infants. We urge you to include the bipartisan *Helping Medicaid Offer Maternity Services (MOMS) Act of 2019* and increased funding for maternal home visiting programs in any year-end package as an important first step in improving maternal health.

As we reflect back on this challenging year, we continue to draw strength from Catholic health care's history of working to heal our communities during past pandemics and economic crises. CHA hopes that Congress and the Administration will again work together for the common good, to protect our communities and prevent further spread of the coronavirus. We ask for swift passage of legislation that can deliver the necessary resources to save lives.

Sincerely,


Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO

CC: Vice President Michael Pence
Members of the House and Senate
Treasury Secretary Mnuchin
White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows