



THE PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDICAID

November 28, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Rob Portman
Member
Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Member
Senate Finance Committee

Dear Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, Senator Portman, and Senator Cantwell:

The Partnership for Medicaid — a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition of organizations representing health care providers, safety net health plans, counties and labor dedicated to preserving and improving the Medicaid program — writes in support of the bipartisan Ensuring Medicaid Provides Opportunities for Widespread Equity, Resources, and Care Act (EMPOWER Care Act, S. 2227/H.R. 5306), to extend and improve the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Medicaid demonstration program. We applaud Sens. Rob Portman, R-Ohio and Maria Cantwell D-Wash., as well as Reps. Brett Guthrie, R-Ky., and Debbie Dingell D-Mich., for sponsoring reauthorization of this vital program that has helped more than 75,000 older adults and people with disabilities across the country move back home. We now urge the program's swift reauthorization by both the Senate and the full House of Representatives before all states exhaust their remaining MFP funding at the end of this year.

First authorized in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 with strong bipartisan support, and signed into law by President George W. Bush, MFP builds on the Medicaid program to help vulnerable, low-income older adults and people with disabilities transition out of nursing homes and other facilities and back to living in their homes and communities with appropriate supports. It also has helped 43 states and the District of Columbia develop the needed infrastructure to make this program successful.

MFP has helped older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity in the setting of their choice, with the strong possibility of achieving cost savings to the Medicaid program. In its 2017 report to Congress based on independent evaluation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services noted that MFP participants who made this transition reported significant and lasting improvements in quality of care, quality of life, and community integration after returning to their communities, while also achieving lower readmission rates. Independent evaluation also found significant reductions of approximately 20 percent in Medicaid expenditures after individuals returned to their communities. MFP shows great promise as a tool to lower Medicaid costs while improving patient care and quality of life. As the National Association of Medicaid Directors testified before the Committee, MFP has significantly helped states “rebalance” their spending on long-term services and supports, and should be reauthorized “quickly enough to provide states with continuity for existing programs.”

Despite the encouraging preliminary findings, MFP’s authorization expired on Sept. 30, 2016. According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 12 states have already exhausted their allotted MFP funding and the remaining state MFP programs will run out by Dec. 31. As a result, states are transitioning fewer individuals and the progress we have made in serving older adults and people with disabilities in their communities is in jeopardy. Many more older adults and people with disabilities still need MFP to help make this difficult transition back to their communities.

We greatly appreciate your leadership in bringing this legislation to the forefront, and urge Congress to reauthorize this vital program before the end of the year.

Sincerely,

American Dental Education Association
America’s Essential Hospitals
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Children’s Hospital Association
Easterseals
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Counties
National Association of Rural Health Clinics
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Hispanic Medical Association
The Jewish Federations of North America