



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

December 10, 2019

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 am writing to express our strong support of H.R. 3 the *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*. We believe this legislation aligns with our longstanding goals and advances aspects of our overall vision for U.S. health care, founded on the core values of Catholic social teaching.

CHA's utmost priority is ensuring access and affordable health care for everyone in our nation, particularly for those who are low-income or vulnerable. When individuals and families are unable to afford the costs of needed medications, their overall health suffers as a result. We commend H.R. 3 for its overarching goal of reversing the trend of rising drug costs and helping Americans to live fuller and healthier lives.

Specifically, CHA supports proposals included in the *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act* to lower the costs of prescription drugs through Medicare negotiation authority by enabling the federal government to leverage its buying power to lower prices and also to compel drug manufacturers to keep prices affordable through rebates. CHA also supports the new patient protections in the bill, including the out-of-pocket maximum for seniors in Medicare Part D to lower drug costs for beneficiaries, as well as the positive changes in supplemental Medigap plans and Medicare Advantage coverage.

CHA envisions a U.S. health care system that is wellness and prevention oriented to improve the health of communities. H.R. 3 supports this goal by expanding Medicare to include preventive dental care, vision and hearing benefits, which will greatly improve beneficiaries' lives. Additionally, this bill reauthorizes the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) demonstration grant program to increase the health care workforce, including in our rural areas, Indian reservations and territories. CHA also supports the legislation's investment in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program to help reduce maternal mortality and morbidity.

Lastly, CHA strongly supports the provisions in the bill that increase federal resources to fight the opioid crisis. Catholic health care has a long tradition of assisting individuals seeking treatment for drug dependency and the investments made by H.R. 3 will continue to give our providers' and communities' additional tools to heal the opioid epidemic.

As we continue to work for a more just and equitable health care system and foster the health and well-being of our communities, we urge bipartisan support for H.R. 3, the *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*.

Sincerely,


Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO