

November 23, 2020

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

As groups representing the employers who sponsor health insurance benefits for tens of millions of Americans, we write to urge you not to adjourn the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress without enacting legislation to reduce health care costs.

Over the past two years, Congress made significant progress on bipartisan health care legislation, including several significant packages that provided relief to patients, providers, and employers during the COVID pandemic. However, key legislation to end the scourge of surprise medical bills has not been brought up for a vote in either the House or Senate, nor included in moving legislative vehicles – despite significant support in both chambers. We hope to see this issue addressed before the end of the year in a way that protects patients and lowers health care costs through legislation that includes a median in-network benchmark payment.

We also urge you to include in any COVID relief bill a number of important health care provisions in the bipartisan *Lower Health Care Costs Act* (S. 1985) that will significantly reduce health care costs and improve quality. These provisions have been vetted by Committees in the House and Senate, passed out of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee by a vote of 20-to-3, [agreed to](#) by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and scored by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Passage of these bipartisan, [deficit-reducing](#) provisions, [which include 54 proposals from 65 senators](#), is absolutely critical to protect patients and help employers in their drive for better health care value. It will reduce the cost of health insurance, ensure transparency and accountability in the health care system, and eliminate abusive practices that are hurting patients. [These provisions](#) would:

- **Promote transparency, fairness, and competition in the health care system.** Congressional action is needed to ban “gag clauses” that hide health care price and quality information from payers and patients. The legislation would also eliminate abusive contracting practices that restrict competition, leverage information to empower consumers and employers, and ensure that health system intermediaries are accountable to patients and plan sponsors.
- **Pass limited, targeted reforms to reduce drug costs without threatening innovation.** Comprehensive legislation to address the high costs of prescription drugs may be out of reach this year. However, Congress can pass narrow provisions to boost competition, speed generics to market, eliminate loopholes, and end certain anticompetitive practices. This low-hanging fruit should not be left to wither on the vine.
- **Leverage information technology to improve health care.** Provisions in the legislation would ensure that Americans can access health care information at their fingertips, including data standards and privacy protections.

Time is running out before Congress adjourns. We respectfully request that these provisions be included in the earliest potential legislative vehicle, whether it is a package to fund the government, a COVID relief measure, or any other legislation that will be voted out of Congress in 2020. Failure to address these bipartisan provisions would mean higher costs for patients and working families, missing an opportunity to meaningfully improve the health care system.

Sincerely,

Alabama Employer Health Consortium  
American Benefits Council  
American Health Policy Institute  
American Rental Association  
American Staffing Association  
Associated Builders and Contractors  
Associated General Contractors of America  
Auto Care Association  
Business Health Care Group of Wisconsin  
Central Penn Business Group on Health  
Colorado Business Group on Health  
Connecticut Business Group on Health  
Corporate Health Care Coalition  
Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers  
Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health  
Economic Alliance for Michigan  
Employers' Advanced Cooperative on Healthcare (Arkansas)  
Employers Health (Ohio)  
Employers Forum of Indiana  
Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value  
Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health  
Health Services Coalition  
Healthcare21 (Knoxville, TN)  
Healthcare Purchaser Alliance of Maine  
Houston Business Coalition on Health  
HR Policy Association  
Independent Electrical Contractors  
International Franchise Association  
Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare  
Louisiana Business Group on Health  
Kansas Business Group on Health  
Kentuckiana Health Collaborative  
Memphis Business Group on Health  
MidAtlantic Business Group on Health  
Midwest Business Group on Health  
Montana Association of Health Care Purchasers  
National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions  
National Association of Health Underwriters  
National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors  
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors  
National Business Group on Health  
National Federation of Independent Business  
National Retail Federation  
New England Employee Benefits Council  
Nevada Business Group on Health  
North Carolina Business Group on Health  
Pacific Business Group on Health

Partnership for Employer-Sponsored Coverage  
Pittsburgh Business Group on Health  
Retail Industry Leaders Association  
Retailers Association of Massachusetts  
Rhode Island Business Group on Health  
Self-Insurance Institute of America, Inc.  
Silicon Valley Employers Forum  
St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition  
Texas Business Group on Health  
The Alliance  
The Coalition to Protect and Promote Association Health Plans  
The ERISA Industry Committee  
The Leapfrog Group  
Washington Health Alliance  
WellOK, The Northeastern Oklahoma Business Coalition  
Wyoming Business Coalition on Health