

November 24, 2020

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

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

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

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

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

On behalf of the Medicaid Health Plans of America (MHPA), the only national trade association with a sole focus on Medicaid, representing more than 100 managed care organizations (MCOs) serving more than 33 million Medicaid beneficiaries in 37 states and DC, I write to encourage action on several Medicaid priorities before the end of the 116th session of Congress. Quick legislative action is necessary to address the severe health care and economic challenges that continue to plague our country due to the coronavirus pandemic. Securing an additional Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) increase remains MHPA's top legislative priority. This action will provide MCOs and states with much needed certainty regarding our operations as we work together to address this national emergency. In addition, we would encourage and appreciate your consideration of several other policies intended to support the overall health care ecosystem, including state Medicaid programs.

Medicaid FMAP

Over the past 8 months, MHPA has consistently echoed calls from governors, state Medicaid directors, state budget officers, along with hundreds of provider and beneficiary-focused groups in requesting that a second temporary FMAP increase be included in any future stimulus legislation. An additional FMAP enhancement of at least 5.8 percent (to bring the total increase to 12 percent) is necessary to address the dire economic and health consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. Since the pandemic began, Medicaid enrollment has increased by more than 4 million beneficiaries, and continued growth in enrollment is expected over the coming months as COVID-19 cases surge again across the country. The growing reliance on state Medicaid programs coincides with unprecedented state budget pressures that experts consistently predict will be worse than the Great Recession. States are facing deep budget cuts which will have severe impacts on Medicaid agencies, providers, and beneficiaries that rely on the program for high quality coverage and care. MHPA's members continue to see states propose and enact unsustainable rate cuts and harmful risk corridors, which threaten the continued viability of state-managed care partnerships. States are cutting provider rates and scaling back optional benefits, such as dental coverage. To minimize severe cuts to state Medicaid budgets, and to avoid disruptions in care and services for beneficiaries at a critical time for our country, Congress must provide enhanced federal funding for Medicaid, through an additional FMAP increase that runs through at least September 2021.

State Plan Option to Extend Continuous Medicaid and CHIP Eligibility for 12 Months Postpartum

MHPA supports the creation of a new state plan option to extend continuous Medicaid and CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Plan) eligibility for 12 months postpartum, which would be a significant step forward in helping to

address gaps in maternal and infant health in the Medicaid program. In the past two decades, the U.S. maternal mortality rate has steadily increased, and more than half of pregnancy-related maternal deaths occur after delivery. Further, black women are three to four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than white women. While babies born to mothers receiving Medicaid or CHIP coverage are automatically eligible for coverage, in many states, Medicaid eligibility for mothers ends at 60 days postpartum, which blocks women from access to coverage and care during the critical period post-pregnancy and birth. A state option to extend continuous eligibility after the 60-day period would support state Medicaid programs in their quest to provide high quality, comprehensive health coverage to women postpartum. We commend the House for passing **H.R. 4996, the Helping Medicaid Offer Maternity Services (MOMS) Act**, bipartisan legislation giving states an option to expand Medicaid coverage for new moms. We ask the Senate to pass similar legislation before the end of 2020. This action would prevent avoidable and premature deaths, and help women and their families live healthier, more productive lives.

Medicaid Extenders

Finally, MHPA urges quick action on the Medicaid-related extender programs set to expire next month. Expiring Medicaid-related extenders such as the Money Follows the Person Demonstration and Medicaid's Protections Against Spousal Impoverishment provisions have a history of bipartisan legislative support and we are hopeful that Congress will enact long-term extensions of these programs. Now more than ever it is critical to do all we can to keep vulnerable populations thriving in home and community-based settings.

Again, MHPA respectfully requests your swift action on the items listed above and we look forward to continuing to work with you and other Congressional leaders to ensure the Medicaid program and the enrollees it serves is a top priority in all year-end legislative vehicles. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me directly at (202) 857-5771 or to Shannon Attanasio, Vice President, Government Relations and Advocacy at (202) 857-5723 or sattanasio@mhpa.org.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Kennedy, MPH
President and CEO