

February 8, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Medicaid Health Plans of America (MHPA) thanks you for your support of the Medicaid program. MHPA and its member health plans look forward to continuing to work closely with you to build on and improve Medicaid for the more than 80 million enrollees that rely on the program for high quality health coverage and life-saving care.

MHPA is the only national trade association with a sole focus on Medicaid, representing more than 130 managed care organizations (MCOs) serving more than 43 million Medicaid beneficiaries in 40 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. MHPA's members include both for-profit and non-profit, national and regional, as well as single-state health plans that compete in the Medicaid market. Nearly three-quarters of all Medicaid beneficiaries receive health care through MCOs, and the association provides research and advocacy services that support policy solutions to enhance the delivery and coordination of comprehensive, cost-effective, and quality health care for Medicaid beneficiaries.

As Congress begins the second session of the 117th Congress, MHPA urges lawmakers to prioritize policy proposals that protect and improve Medicaid for the vulnerable populations that rely on this critical safety net program. For 2022, MHPA therefore encourages Congress to pass legislation that:

- ensures all new mothers on Medicaid and CHIP have access to their health care coverage for a full year during the postpartum period (Helping MOMS Act, H.R. 3345);
- provides Medicaid coverage to eligible, justice-involved individuals 30 days prior to release (Medicaid Reentry Act, S.285, H.R.955);
- ensures permanent and sustainable Medicaid financing for Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories;
- permanently authorizes the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP);
- makes permanent the Money Follows the Person Program and includes protection against Spousal Impoverishment;
- provides one year of continuous eligibility for children covered by Medicaid and CHIP;
- invests additional dollars in support of Medicaid HCBS (home and community-based services);

- extends the 100 percent Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for Urban Indian Organizations and Native Hawaiian Health Systems for another two years;
- Allows for inclusion of expenses for social determinants of health (SDOH)-related activities in the numerator of the Medicaid Medical Loss Ratio (MLR) calculation.

Furthermore, MHPA remains concerned with any precipitous termination of the enhanced FMAP and continuous eligibility/Maintenance of Effort (MOE) provisions included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which included significant safeguards to protect Medicaid beneficiaries from losing coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge Congress to proceed with caution when considering a wind down of the enhanced FMAP and MOE protections.

Any unwinding or “off ramp” from these provisions should be both evidence-informed and structured to help beneficiaries and states prepare for such a change. For this reason, we ask that Congress provide at least a 120-day lead time from the date of enactment of such a provision so that states, in coordination with Medicaid health plans, have adequate time to conduct redeterminations in a thoughtful manner. This will help to ensure that enrollees who rely on Medicaid for critical health coverage and care have sufficient time to reconfirm their eligibility. We also note that the simultaneous processing of millions of eligibility determinations will prove operationally challenging for states and MCOs, and unless sufficient time is allowed for this process, millions of individuals who otherwise remain eligible for Medicaid could still lose coverage.

MHPA remains committed to promoting and expanding meaningful health care coverage, which is critical to health equity, along with ensuring vulnerable individuals can live healthy, productive lives. Twelve states have not yet taken advantage of the ACA’s Medicaid expansion option and our hope is these states can soon expand as much of the population that would benefit include traditionally underserved populations, people of color, and working adults. As Congress considers additional options to close the Medicaid coverage gap, we urge lawmakers, to the extent possible, to utilize existing coverage options to serve vulnerable populations.

We look forward to following up with your staff soon on our Medicaid and managed care priorities for the coming year. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Shannon Attanasio, Vice President, Government Relations and Advocacy, at sattanasio@mhpa.org.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Kennedy
President and CEO