

August 7th, 2019

Dear Member of Congress,

When Congress returns from the August break, we the undersigned urge you to take swift action to help patients, employers, and taxpayers by promptly voting to pass legislation such as the bipartisan *Lower Health Care Costs Act* (S. 1895). With significant support on both sides of the aisle, as well as in both chamber of Congress, the time is now to take meaningful steps to reduce health care costs. Employers are at the forefront of innovation to improve health care quality and decrease costs. Final legislation should include provisions to enhance these efforts and do the following:

- **End the surprise medical billing crisis by enacting a local, market-based benchmark backstop.** Rather than a government-mandated binding arbitration process that is opaque and will allow continued price-gouging of patients, Congress should protect patients from surprise billing in a way that will not increase premiums and total health care costs. And patients should be protected not just once they get to the hospital, but also in the ambulance or air ambulance that takes them there.
- **Reduce the high costs of prescription drugs.** Congress should include provisions to increase choice and competition, speed generic and biosimilar products to market, and end gaming of the current regulatory and patent system. Congress should consider including provisions that passed in the Senate Judiciary Committee with broad bipartisan support as well – including cracking down on pay-for-delay arrangements and “evergreening”, ending sovereign immunity schemes, and promoting wider use of biosimilars.
- **Require transparency, fairness and competition in the health care system.** Patients deserve to be protected from anti-competitive contracting practices and gag clauses. Congress should also unleash the potential of health care claims data to improve quality and reduce costs, ensure that prescription drug benefits are managed in the best interests of patients and plan sponsors, and ensure that patients know what the real costs of their care will be.
- **Fund America’s public health infrastructure.** As Congress moves to continue funding for community health centers and other public programs, this funding should be paired with reforms to improve prevention and management of chronic illness and obesity, modernize data systems, and improve maternal and perinatal health.
- **Improve health information technology.** Congress should include bipartisan measures to bolster health care cost transparency, improve cybersecurity in health care, promote interoperability and protect patient privacy.

In 2019, Congress has a historic opportunity to lower health care costs, improve quality, and ensure fairness, competition and transparency in the health care system for all Americans. This opportunity should not be squandered. When Congress returns in September, we urge leadership to bring legislation that meets these objectives to a vote and send the bills to the President’s desk to be signed into law.

Sincerely,

American Bakers Association
American Benefits Council
American Hotel & Lodging Association
American Rental Association
American Staffing Association
Associated Builders and Contractors
Associated General Contractors of America
Auto Care Association
Business Health Care Group of Wisconsin
California Grocers Association
Central Penn Business Group on Health
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
Corporate Health Care Coalition
DFW Business Group on Health
Economic Alliance for Michigan
Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value
Food Marketing Institute
Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health
Health Services Coalition
HealthCare 21 Business Coalition
Healthcare Purchaser Alliance of Maine
Houston Business Coalition on Health
HR Policy Association
Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC)
International Franchise Association
Kansas Business Group on Health
Lehigh Valley Business Coalition on Healthcare
Louisiana Business Group on Health
Memphis Business Group on Health
MidAtlantic Business Group on Health
Midwest Business Group on Health
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 Restaurant Association
National Retail Federation
Nevada Business Group on Health
New England Employee Benefits Council
North Carolina Business Group on Health
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association
Pacific Business Group on Health
Partnership for Employer-Sponsored Coverage
Pittsburgh Business Group on Health
Retailers Association of Massachusetts
Retail Industry Leaders Association
Rhode Island Business Group on Health

Self-Insurance Institute of America, Inc.
Silicon Valley Employers Forum
South Carolina Business Coalition on Health
St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition
Texas Business Group on Health
The Alliance
The Coalition to Protect and Promote Association Health Plans
The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers
The Employers' Advanced Cooperative on Healthcare (Arkansas)
The ERISA Industry Committee
The Leapfrog Group
WellOK, the Northeastern Oklahoma Business Coalition on Health
Wyoming Business Coalition on Health