

November 13, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader United State
United State House of Representative
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

As the 118th Congress draws to a close, millions of Americans are looking to you to provide relief from high and rising health care costs that are threatening the health and financial well-being of our nation's families, workers, employers, small businesses, and communities. Over the last two years, Congress has spent countless hours drafting, debating, and advancing bipartisan, commonsense legislation that could address some of our health care system's most obvious failings and take critical steps to ensure everyone in America has access to the high quality and affordable health care they deserve. But time is running out to get these policies across the finish line. **We urge you to act before the December 20th government funding deadline to finish the job you started and advance pro-consumer reforms to the health care system that improve transparency, promote healthy competition, and curb industry abuses in order to lower health care costs for everyone.**

Last year, the House of Representatives advanced the *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act*, which promoted meaningful transparency in pricing and billing, and advanced "same service, same price" payment reforms in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote - but that legislation has yet to be considered in the Senate. Key committees in the House and Senate have also considered legislation to address anticompetitive behavior of drug corporations and to bring to light the harmful role of private equity ownership in health care - but those policies have yet to come to the floor for a vote. If enacted, these policies could set a critical foundation for reining in rising health care industry consolidation and the ability of medical monopolies to reduce competition and set unjustifiably high prices. These reforms would help reduce inflated health care spending and make health care more affordable and value-driven for consumers. But time is running out for the 118th Congress to act.

Therefore, we call on Congress to pass a robust health care package that improves health care affordability through policies to increase hospital and PBM pricing and billing transparency; "same service, same price" payment reforms; and prohibitions on anticompetitive contracting terms, among other key health system reforms.

As stewards of the federal budget and its many implications on our health care system, Congress must sometimes take difficult votes about the direction our country is steering - but a robust, well-vetted, bipartisan health care package that addresses our health care affordability crisis should not be one of them. The American people are with you. Consumers across the country are feeling the affordability crisis firsthand and want the government to act. Large majorities of voters support a range of policies to address consolidation and lower prices. Voters from both sides of the aisle broadly support:¹

- Requiring hospitals to provide real prices in advance, not estimates (93%)
- Limiting outpatient fees to the same price charged by doctors in the community (85%)
- Preventing hospitals from engaging in business tactics that reduce competition (75%)

The American people are counting on you to take action before the end of the year, and the undersigned organizations implore you to act now. We stand ready to support you in this essential and urgently needed work. Please contact Jane Sheehan, Deputy Senior Director of Government Relations at Families USA, for further information and to let us know how we can best be of service to you.

Sincerely,

Families USA

ACA Consumer Advocacy

AFSCME

Aging Life Care Association

Allergy and Asthma Network

American Benefits Council

American Medical Student Association

American Muslim Health Professionals

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Autism Society of America

Center for Elder Law and Justice

Clear Health Care Advocacy

Coalition on Human Needs

Colorado Consumer Health Initiative

Community Catalyst

Community Service Society of New York

Consumers for Quality Care

Doctors for America

Economic Opportunity Institute, Washington

The ERISA Industry Committee

¹ Arnold Ventures, "Arnold Foundation Survey (Study #14460)," Arnold Ventures, March 23, 2023.

https://www.arnoldventures.org/stories/new-poll-majority-of-voters-support-aggressive-congressional-action-to-lower-hospital-prices?x-craft-preview=FZfdMAYpOB&token=WENwOldeHSblx2pRQ6y01tk_BGY5flyX; Patient Rights Advocate, Inc. and the Marist Poll, "National Survey December 2023," PatientRightsAdvocate.org, December 2023, <https://www.patientrightsadvocate.org/2024maristpoll>

Florida Voices for Health
Gerontological Society of America
GO2 for Lung Cancer
Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health
Health Care Voices
Health Equity Solutions, Connecticut
Hydrocephalus Association
Indiana Employers Forum
International Association of Firefighters
Iowa Citizen Action
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kentucky Voices for Health
Kintegra Family Medicine
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
Medicare Rights Center
Moms Rising
National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions
National Association of Social Workers
National Consumers League
National Disability Rights Network
New Jersey Citizen Action
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Pennsylvania Health Access Network
Purchaser Business Group on Health
Primary Care Development Corporation, NY
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Small Business Majority
Social Security Works
South Carolina Appleseed
Swope Health Services
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
Third Way
Transgender Awareness Alliance
UNITE HERE Health, California
U.S. PIRG
Utah Health Policy Project
Virginia Organizing
Whole Washington