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February 13, 2021

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

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

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

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

RE: Patient Community Healthcare Priorities for the 118th Congress

The undersigned organizations write to welcome you to the 118th Congress. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you in the coming months and years to advance access to health care coverage for patients.

The undersigned organizations represent millions of patients and consumers facing serious, acute, and chronic health conditions across the country. Our organizations have a unique perspective on what patients need to prevent disease, cure illness, and manage chronic health conditions. Our breadth enables us to draw upon a wealth of knowledge and expertise that can be an invaluable resource in this discussion.

In March 2017, our organizations agreed upon three overarching <u>principles</u> to guide any work to reform and improve the nation's healthcare system. These principles state that: (1) healthcare should be accessible, meaning that coverage should be easy to understand and not pose a barrier to care; (2) healthcare should be affordable, enabling patients to access the treatments they need to live healthy and productive lives; and (3) healthcare must be adequate, meaning healthcare coverage should cover treatments patients need, including all the services in the essential health benefit (EHB) package.

Some of the specific priorities we have identified for the 118th Congress include but are not limited to:

- Protect Medicaid and end policies that create barriers to care;
- Permanently close the coverage gap in states that haven't expanded Medicaid;
- Limit non-compliant plans;
- Promote health insurance enrollment with a focus on addressing disparities in coverage;
- Promote affordability of coverage by expanding premium subsidies permanently, implementing the family glitch rule, eliminating the ESI firewall, and addressing high out-of-pocket costs in ACA plans;
- Expand coverage of and parity for mental health services;
- Defend and enforce coverage of all recommended preventive healthcare services without cost-sharing;
- Support permanent funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The above are high-level priorities and we can share more detailed recommendations on all coverage issues in further discussions.

We encourage you to consider our organizations as a resource as you undertake the policy initiatives ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Dexter at the National Health Council or Lauren Drew at the National Kidney Foundation if you or your staff would like to discuss these issues in greater detail. They are reachable via e-mail at idexter@nhcouncil.org or lauren.drew@kidney.org.

Alpha-1 Foundation
ALS Association
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Kidney Fund
American Lung Association

Arthritis Foundation

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Cancer Support Community

CancerCare

Chronic Disease Coalition

Crohn's & Colitis Foundation

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Epilepsy Foundation

Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research (FSR)

Hemophilia Federation of America

Immune Deficiency Foundation

Lupus Foundation of America

Lutheran Services in America

March of Dimes

Muscular Dystrophy Association

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

National Eczema Association

National Health Council

National Hemophilia Foundation

National Kidney Foundation

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

National Organization for Rare Disorders

National Patient Advocate Foundation

National Psoriasis Foundation

Pulmonary Hypertension Association

Susan G. Komen

The AIDS Institute

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Mended Hearts, Inc.

Volunteers of America

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease