



February 18, 2021

The Honorable Charles 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 Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

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

We, the undersigned organizations representing patients, health care workers, children, older adults, people with disabilities, pregnant and postpartum women, and health insurance providers, are writing on behalf of the Modern Medicaid Alliance. We appreciate lawmakers' efforts to enhance reimbursements for home and community-based services, incentivize non-expansion states to expand Medicaid, and expand postpartum coverage in Medicaid, and we strongly encourage Congress to keep these provisions in the final legislation. Today we ask Congress with the greatest urgency to take the vital step of strengthening America's Medicaid program in upcoming COVID-19 relief legislation.

We specifically call on Congress to enhance federal financing for Medicaid by increasing states' Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) by a total of at least 12 percentage points, consistent with the previous request made by the bipartisan National Governors Association.

As the number of Americans relying on Medicaid continues to [increase](#) due to the COVID-19 public health and economic crises, the Modern Medicaid Alliance is keenly focused on the challenges facing state Medicaid programs and the millions of Americans who rely on this critical safety net for essential health coverage. Medicaid is the largest health care program in the country, covering about 1 in 5 Americans, including millions of children, older adults, people with disabilities, and nearly 2 million veterans.

The number of Americans who rely on Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) has grown dramatically during the COVID-19 crisis. From February to September 2020, Medicaid and CHIP enrollment has increased by more than [6 million](#) people, or 8.6% nationwide, with the [fastest enrollment growth](#) among non-elderly, nondisabled adults.



Through December 2022, an additional [5.03-10.25 million](#) people are projected to enroll in the Medicaid program as a result of the economic impact of COVID-19, reinforcing that now is the time to strengthen this vital program. Significant increased enrollment in the program is happening at the same time state revenues are dropping dramatically, and overall state budget shortfalls are [projected](#) to reach \$555 billion through 2022.

Without increased funding for Medicaid, hardworking Americans, many of whom are at an increased risk of severe impacts from COVID-19, could be denied access to the essential care they need and deserve. This is especially true for People of Color — who have been hardest hit by the crisis — with Medicaid providing coverage for more than [1 in 4](#) Black and Hispanic children and nonelderly adults. Absent increased funding, Medicaid enrollees stand to face [devastating consequences](#), such as:

- **Threatening children’s access to care**, due to [lower payments](#) to children’s hospitals and pediatric providers.
- **Fewer older adults able to stay in their homes and communities**, as programs [reduce or eliminate](#) home and community-based services and supports.
- **Decreased access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment**, at the same time that opioid overdoses skyrocket across the country, due to [cuts to program funding](#). Medicaid is the largest payer for mental health care, and one-third of those in the expansion population have mental health and substance use disorder needs.
- **Longer waitlists for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities**, as crucial home and community-based services [may be eliminated](#).

Support for strengthening Medicaid is a bipartisan issue. According to [recent polling](#), 4 in 5 voters (80%) believe increasing funding for Medicaid during the COVID-19 crisis should be a priority for Congress, including a bipartisan majority of Democrats (92%) and Republicans (68%). Voters also want to see the new Administration take action on this critical issue, with 75% saying increasing Medicaid funding should be a priority for the Biden-Harris Administration in its first 100 days.

Thank you for your efforts thus far to address public health during this challenging time. The Modern Medicaid Alliance is eager to work with the new Congress and new Administration to ensure that, together, we overcome the COVID-19 crisis.

Sincerely,

Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy
Alliance for Aging Research
America's Health Insurance Plans
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Nurses Association



AmeriHealth Caritas
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Black Women's Health Imperative
Blue Shield of California
Caregiver Action Network
Celiac Disease Foundation
Centene Corporation
Children's Hospital Association
Health Care Service Corporation
Healthcare Leadership Council
Healthy Schools Campaign
HealthyWomen
HMS
Justice in Aging
LeadingAge
Lutheran Services in America
Missouri Association of School Psychologists
Molina Healthcare
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Alliance for Medicaid in Education
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Counties (NACo)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of School Psychologists
National Consumers League
National Military Family Association
National Organization on Disability
Nurse-Family Partnership
Providence
Retiresafe
School-Based Health Alliance
The Arc of the United States
Trinity Health
United Spinal Association