February 13, 2021

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

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

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

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 principles 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 jdexter@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