



Modern Medicaid
ALLIANCE

February 24, 2022

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

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

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

The Modern Medicaid Alliance – a coalition of leading advocacy organizations representing patients, health care workers, children, older adults, people with disabilities, pregnant and postpartum women, and health insurance providers – is urging Congress to pass bipartisan legislation to strengthen Medicaid for the millions of children, older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, and hardworking Americans who rely on the program.

The Modern Medicaid Alliance appreciates lawmakers' efforts to strengthen Medicaid throughout the COVID-19 public health crisis. We are writing today to strongly encourage Congress to pass bipartisan legislation that includes the following Medicaid provisions:

- **Expand Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) maternal health coverage to 12 months postpartum,**
- **Provide adequate funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS),**
- **Close the Medicaid coverage gap by expanding the eligibility of Affordable Care Act qualified health plans,**
- **Provide permanent increased funding for Puerto Rico's Medicaid program,**
- **Make permanent the Money Follows the Person program and HCBS spousal impoverishment protections, and**
- **Extend 12 months continuous coverage for children on Medicaid and CHIP and permanently extend the CHIP program.**

Medicaid plays a critical role in helping Americans when they need it most and has acted as a safety net for at-risk populations to receive high-quality, affordable care, particularly during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. According to [recent polling](#), nearly 90% of Americans say it's important to have a strong, sustainable Medicaid program in the U.S.

Passing the Medicaid provisions outlined above is critically important to ensuring that the program is strong and sustainable for the millions who rely on it, and that all Americans have access to the essential care they need and deserve.

The U.S. has the [highest](#) maternal mortality rate – deaths within one year from the end of a pregnancy – of any developed country. Women of color account for a disproportionate number of those deaths. Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women are 3.3 and 2.5 times [more likely](#), respectively, to die from



pregnancy-related causes than non-Hispanic white women. Extending postpartum Medicaid coverage to one year after delivery has the potential to help a total of approximately [720,000](#) low-income mothers annually.

Medicaid HCBS plays a vital role in providing low-income older adults and individuals with disabilities across America with the support they need to live at home and stay connected to their communities. Medicaid funds the majority of HCBS ([57%](#)), which encompass [services](#) that address both medical and daily living needs. However, more funding is needed to build a sustainable HCBS infrastructure that expands access to quality services and supports the essential workers who provide these services. Nearly [820,000](#) Americans remain on waitlists to receive HCBS, oftentimes for years. Increased investment in HCBS would help ensure older adults and people with disabilities in every state have the option to get the support they need at home and preserve their independence.

Over [2 million](#) low-income Americans from 12 states do not have access to Medicaid coverage. Closing the Medicaid coverage gap through expanded eligibility of Affordable Care Act qualified health plans would ensure affordable coverage for these Americans while also protecting the coverage of the nearly 15 million Americans enrolled in expanded Medicaid.

Medicaid covers [1.5 million](#) Puerto Rico residents, approximately 40% of the territory's total population. Increasing the federal match for Puerto Rico's Medicaid program will fill critical gaps in the health safety net infrastructure and help ensure the program can fully meet enrollees' health care needs.

Money Follows the Person and HCBS spousal impoverishment protections enable more at-risk Americans to receive critical long-term services and supports in their homes and communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having programs like these that help people remain in or return to their homes and communities. Making the Money Follows the Person program and spousal impoverishment protections permanent will mitigate disruptions in care and reduce uncertainty for individuals who rely on HCBS.

Medicaid and CHIP are a lifeline for America's children. As of July 2021, [39.2 million children](#) are covered by Medicaid and CHIP – accounting for nearly half of all enrollees. All American children deserve high-quality health coverage they can depend on, including children from families with low incomes. Permanently extending the CHIP program and extending 12 months continuous eligibility for children covered by Medicaid and CHIP will help ensure a healthy start for children who need it most by reducing disruptions in coverage and care.

Thank you for your efforts thus far to strengthen Medicaid during this challenging time. The Modern Medicaid Alliance and our partners remain committed to working with Congress to build a stronger, more sustainable Medicaid for the American families and communities that depend on it.

Sincerely,

The Modern Medicaid Alliance

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The [Modern Medicaid Alliance](#) is a partnership between Americans who value Medicaid and leading advocacy organizations. Our mission is to educate policymakers and the public about the benefits of Medicaid to the American people in terms of cost savings, health outcomes, and social impact, and to highlight how Medicaid is innovating in the delivery of care – especially for America's most vulnerable citizens – and accountability of the program.