



Modern Medicaid
ALLIANCE

November 18, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, S-230
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

As cases of COVID-19 continue to increase across the country, the Modern Medicaid Alliance is keenly focused on how the virus and its economic impacts are affecting hundreds of millions of Americans and states' Medicaid programs. The Modern Medicaid Alliance includes national and regional organizations that represent patients, consumers, health care workers, children, older adults, people with disabilities, pregnant and postpartum women, and health insurance providers. Together, we ask Congress with the greatest urgency to strengthen America's Medicaid program in pending COVID-19 relief legislation during the final weeks of the 116th Congress.

We specifically call on Congress to enhance federal financing for Medicaid by increasing states' Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to a total of at least 12 percentage points, consistent with the request made by the bipartisan National Governors Association. In addition, we urge Congress to include dedicated funds for Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS).

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. Over the past 50 years, Medicaid has played a critical role in helping Americans when they need it most and has acted as a safety net for vulnerable populations to receive high-quality, cost-effective care.

The number of Americans who rely on Medicaid has grown dramatically during the COVID-19 crisis. From February to July 2020, Medicaid enrollment has increased by more than [4.3 million](#)



people, or 6.1% nationwide, with the [fastest enrollment growth](#) among non-elderly, non-disabled adults. Looking ahead, recent projections show that states expect Medicaid enrollment and spending to increase by more than [8%](#) in the fiscal year of 2021, 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 most at-risk 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 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 Medicaid is a bipartisan issue. In fact, [recent polling](#) found that 83% of voters think increasing funding for Medicaid amid COVID-19 should be a priority for Congress, including a bipartisan majority of Democrats (94%) and Republicans (73%). Additionally, over three-quarters of voters (79%) think it is better for lawmakers to increase spending on public programs like Medicaid rather than decrease spending.

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



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Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of People with Disabilities
America's Health Insurance Plans
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Association of People Supporting Employment First
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Black Women's Health Imperative
Blue Shield of California
Caregiver Action Network
Centene Corporation
Children's Hospital Association
Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC)
Healthcare Leadership Council
Healthy Schools Campaign
HealthyWomen
HMS
Justice In Aging
LeadingAge
Lutheran Services in America
Mental Health 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 Consumers League
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Military Family Association
Nurse-Family Partnership
School-Based Health Alliance
The Arc of the United States
Trinity Health
ZERO TO THREE