



June 3, 2021

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), representing more than 133,500 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to congratulate you on your confirmation as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The AAFP looks forward to working with you to ensure equitable and affordable access to high-quality, continuous primary care services for all Americans.

The AAFP [shares your commitment](#) to improving health care coverage, advancing health equity, and facilitating the transition to value-based care. Investing in primary care is an essential strategy to achieving these shared goals: evidence confirms that primary care mitigates health disparities and improves patients' access to and utilization of low-cost, high-value care that ultimately results in better patient outcomes and population health.^{1,2,3,4} In order to ensure every American can get the comprehensive primary care they need, we look forward to partnering with you to strengthen Medicare, Medicaid, and marketplace coverage, build a robust primary care workforce, expand primary care alternative payment models (APMs), and reduce physicians' administrative burdens.

Improve Health Care Coverage, Affordability, and Access

- Protect and expand Medicaid coverage eligibility and ensure beneficiaries' access to primary care by raising Medicaid payment rates to equal at least Medicare rates.
- Strengthen marketplace coverage reversing harmful regulations that undermine affordability, essential benefits, and marketplace stability.
- Invest in high-value primary care by addressing Medicare payment imbalances.
- Continue to restore and codify non-discrimination protections for all individuals, including LGBTQ+ patients, those with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and those seeking access to comprehensive reproductive health care.
- Permanently cover high-value telehealth services, including audio-only visits, that are provided as part of a patient's medical home.

Expand and Diversify APMs that Center Primary Care

- Develop, with ongoing input from physician stakeholders, [transparent, stable APMs](#) to recruit and retain physician practices into value-based care.
- Immediately make [technical improvements](#) to existing models to ensure long-term success.

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- Strive to [broaden model opportunities](#) across payers, as well as improve harmonization of model requirements among payers.

Reduce Administrative Requirements So Physicians Can Focus on Patient Care

- Automate, streamline, and reduce the volume of [prior authorization](#) and other administrative tasks that create barriers to timely, appropriate care and significantly contribute to physician burnout.
- Continue to advance [interoperability](#) to facilitate coordinated care and reduce administrative burdens associated with electronic health records.

Build a Robust and Diverse Primary Care Workforce

- Leverage the [Graduate Medical Education](#) program to increase primary care training opportunities, mitigate physician shortages, and address maldistribution.

Again, congratulations on your confirmation as CMS Administrator. We look forward to partnering with you and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our shared goals for increasing equitable access to high-quality health care. To set up a meeting please contact Stephanie Quinn, Senior Vice President for Advocacy, Practice Advancement and Policy at squinn@aafp.org.

Sincerely,



Gary LeRoy, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair
American Academy of Family Physicians

¹ Hostetter, J., Schwarz, N., Klug, M. et al. Primary care visits increase utilization of evidence-based preventative health measures. *BMC Fam Pract* 21, 151 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12875-020-01216-8>.

² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. *Implementing High-Quality Primary Care: Rebuilding the Foundation of Health Care*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
<https://doi.org/10.17226/25983>.

³ Ferrante JM, Lee JH, McCarthy EP, et al. Primary care utilization and colorectal cancer incidence and mortality among Medicare beneficiaries: A population-based, case-control study. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2013;159(7):437–446. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24081284/>

⁴ Basu S, Berkowitz SA, Phillips RL, Bitton A, Landon BE, Phillips RS. Association of Primary Care Physician Supply With Population Mortality in the United States, 2005-2015. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2019;179(4):506–514. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2018.7624