



February 11, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Markup of Legislation for Budget Reconciliation

Dear Chairman Pallone,

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the 136,700 family physicians and medical students we represent. We support the following provisions which strengthen public health, the primary care workforce, and expand access to health care. The impact of COVID-19 on our health care system, especially primary care, cannot be understated and we thank the Committee for its efforts to address this issue.

Subtitle A: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Public Health

The AAFP strongly supports additional funding to improve distribution, administration, and monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines, including through programs to bolster vaccine confidence and ensure equitable access to patients. We are pleased that this legislation supports additional testing, contact tracing, and the manufacturing of personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies. These have been [priorities](#) for the AAFP throughout the pandemic. The AAFP recently [wrote](#) to the Committee stressing the importance of including primary care physicians in COVID vaccine distribution.

We are also supportive of the additional funding for the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program, National Health Service Corps (NHSC), and Community Health Centers (CHC). They play a critical role in strengthening the primary care workforce and providing access to care, particularly in medically underserved and rural areas. The AAFP has advocated for the expansion of these programs, including a [letter](#) recently sent to the committee and [supported](#) the *Strengthening America's Health Care Readiness Act* which increases investment in the NHSC.

Subtitle B: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Medicaid

The AAFP is pleased that this legislation requires Medicaid coverage of COVID-19 vaccines and treatment without beneficiary cost sharing with vaccine administration matched at 100 percent federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) through one year after the end of the PHE. We have repeatedly [called](#) for coverage of COVID-19 vaccine administration for all patients without cost sharing, including an enhanced FMAP, and [raised](#) concerns that current policies exclude some Medicaid beneficiaries with limited benefit packages.

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The Academy has supported legislation to extend Medicaid eligibility to women for 12 months postpartum in [multiple letters](#) to Congressional leadership through support of H.R. 4996, the *Helping Medicaid Offer Maternity Services Act* (Helping MOMS Act). Medicaid is the largest single payer of maternity care in the U.S., covering 43 percent of all births in 2017. As such, Medicaid plays a significant role in improving maternal health, helping to eliminate preventable maternal mortality, and reducing health disparities. The AAFP has also supported 12 months of postpartum Medicaid coverage in letters to [CMS](#) and [HHS](#).

The Academy has consistently been supportive of an increased FMAP for states during the COVID-19 pandemic in [multiple coalition letters](#) to Congressional leadership, as well as [support](#) for countercyclical FMAP to account for similar fluctuations in economic activity in the future. We further support a temporary increase in FMAP for states that have not yet [expanded Medicaid eligibility](#), as included in the recent *States Achieve Medicaid Expansion Act of 2021*.

Subtitle C: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to CHIP

The AAFP appreciates the provisions requiring CHIP coverage of COVID-19 vaccines and treatment without cost sharing, as well as creating the option for states to extend CHIP eligibility for women to 12 months postpartum. The Academy has [advocated](#) for coverage of COVID-19 vaccines without cost-sharing and opposes prior authorization requirements or increased cost-sharing for Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries.

The AAFP commends the committee's actions to ensure our nation can fully recover from the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Should you have any questions, please contact John Aguilar, Legislative Affairs Manager at jaguilar@aafp.org.

Sincerely,



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