



November 18, 2020

The Honorable Abigail Spanberger
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dusty Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Spanberger and Johnson:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the 136,700 family physicians, residents and medical students we represent, I write to offer our support for H.R. 8623, the *Securing Affordable Vaccines Equally (SAVE) for Seniors Act of 2020*.

Your legislation would clarify that Medicare must cover, without cost-sharing, a COVID-19 vaccine authorized for emergency use, just as it would have done for one licensed under the Public Health Service Act.

Research has shown that cost-sharing and high deductibles can cause patients to delay or forego care. When this happens, patients often face worse outcomes and costlier care.¹ Moreover, during the ongoing pandemic, older adults have the highest risk of severe illness from COVID-19 resulting in higher rates of hospitalization and in-patient care. This includes higher death rates—8 out of 10 COVID deaths have been in adults over 65.² Protecting this vulnerable population is one of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) top priorities for vaccine distribution.³

By closing the loophole in the *CARES Act*, H.R. 8623 will ensure Medicare beneficiaries do not face financial barriers to COVID-19 vaccination after the public health emergency. In the likely case that full vaccination requires two vaccine doses, this legislation is even more crucial to ensure seniors can receive both doses in the required timeframe without financial burden.⁴

Once again, thank you for introducing this important legislation. We look forward to working with you to move this legislation forward. For more information, please contact John Aguilar, Manager for Legislative Affairs at jaquilar@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

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

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¹ Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. "Premiums and Cost-Sharing in Medicaid: A Review of Research Findings." The Kaiser Family Foundation. February 2013. <https://www.kff.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/8417-premiums-and-cost-sharing-in-medicaid.pdf>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Older Adults." Updated: September 11, 2020; Accessed: November 16, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): How CDC IS MAKING COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations." Updated: November 9, 2020; Accessed: November 16, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work." Updated: November 2, 2020; Accessed: November 16, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/about-vaccines/how-they-work.html>