



February 10, 2020

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

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

In December 2019, the United States Congress approved a \$1.4 trillion spending package to fund the federal government for fiscal year 2020. Included in that legislation was an estimated \$50 billion in spending on new policies and programs; as well as a complete repeal of three health care tax policies. What was not included in the spending package was funding for critical health care programs such as Community Health Centers, the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and other important policies impacting the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

While it is true that these programs, often referred to as the “health extenders,” saw their funding temporarily extended until May 22, this continued short-term approach prevents these programs from fully realizing their mission to train a sufficient workforce and provide the full scope of primary care services to as many patients as possible.

We are especially concerned that at a time of escalating health care costs and decreasing access to primary care for millions of Americans, Congress failed to prioritize the funding of programs that have a proven track record of success in expanding access to primary care. Because of this record of success, Congress has relied on each of these programs to tackle the tough public health issues of our time – opioid addiction, HIV/AIDs, maternal mortality, care for rural and underserved populations, caring for veterans and natural disasters. It is difficult for the AAFP to comprehend how a long-term solution for these programs remains unresolved as we start the new year – negatively impacting access to primary care for millions of Americans.

The AAFP calls on Congress to immediately pass legislation that, at a minimum, reflects the policies included in the bipartisan, bicameral agreement reached by the two committees of jurisdiction – Energy & Commerce and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committees – during the 1st Session of the 116th Congress that would reauthorize and fund the

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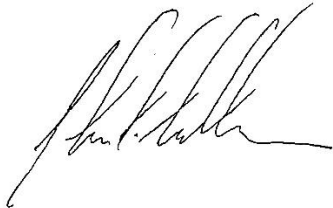
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Community Health Center, Teaching Health Center and National Health Service Corps programs; as well as other Medicare and Medicaid programs. The AAFP applauds the hard work of these Committees to reach agreement on a longer-term extension of these programs.

We urge you to prioritize passage of the health extender policies and not wait until May to take action. Your positive action in the next few weeks will create stability in these important programs and avoid any further disruptions caused by lingering uncertainties associated with future program funding. Failure to act in a timely manner only further impacts these programs, which results in decreased access to primary care for millions of people. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure a long-term solution is acted upon well before the May deadline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John S. Cullen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John S. Cullen, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

C: The Honorable Frank Pallone
 The Honorable Greg Walden
 The Honorable Lamar Alexander
 The Honorable Patty Murray